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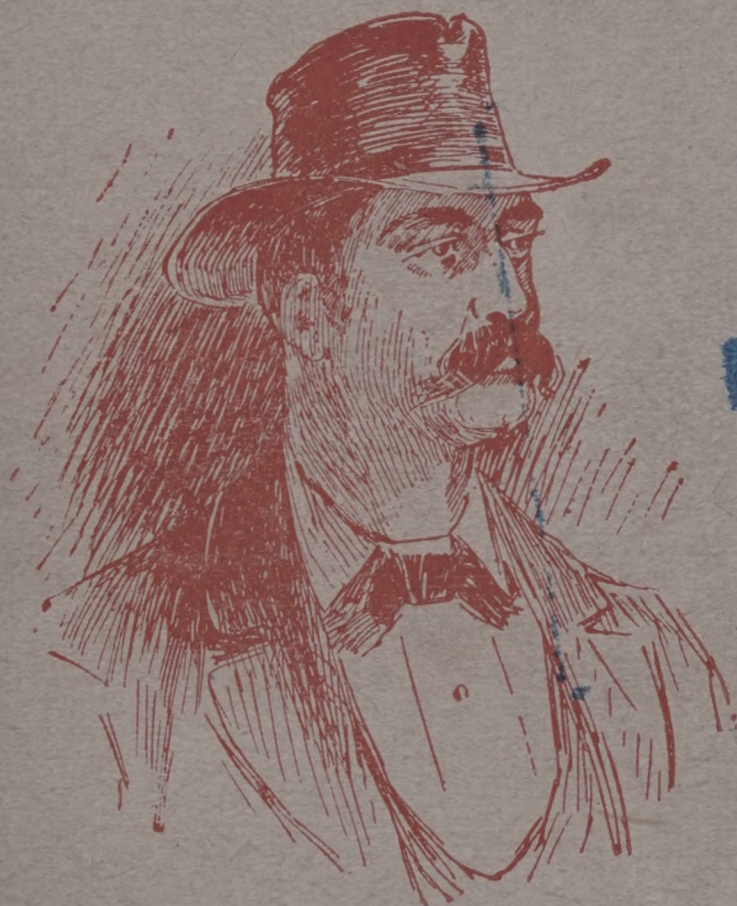
"A Great American Novel"



An Indiana Man

By Le Roy Armstrong

E. L. Dimmick



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AN INDIANA MAN



BY
LE ROY ARMSTRONG



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AN INDIANA MAN.

CHAPTER I.

HIS FIRST ESTATE.

The preacher had lifted his hands in benediction over his people, and in the pauses between his solemn sentences they heard the rain driven fiercely against the window panes. There was a furtive looking about for overshoes, a quiet gathering up of umbrellas; and on the untamed borders of ceremony near the door, some men and women were putting on their gossamers.

Ellet Grant, up there in the choir's corner, near the pulpit, lifted his head from the moment's devotion, and caught the bright eyes of John Haberly fixed upon him. There was something more than friendship between these two men, and yet they could by no means be called intimate. There was a phase of nature in each one which caught its like reflected from the other; and they said less when they met, yet seemed to under-

stand each other better, and enjoy more each transient meeting.

"Come to dinner with me," said Haberly, as the two shook hands at his pew door. "It is raining too hard for you to ride home."

They hurried through the gusty street, turned at the corner and met the rain-laden wind, picked their difficult way over the crossing, and entered Haberly's gate. It was one of the handsome houses in Fairview, and its owner somehow contrived, even here in midwinter, and in a midwinter rain storm, to keep it presentable.

"Do you know what I was thinking to-day, as I watched you back there in the church, Ellet?" said Haberly, as they sat by his wood fire after dinner.

"Thinking how beautifully I was listening to the sermon, I suppose."

Haberly's red lips parted and his white teeth showed in appreciation of what he took for humor.

"I was thinking of something I have heard forty times since the last election. You ought to run for sheriff."

"I?"

"Yes, you. There are a good many reasons. Hall has had two terms, and cannot serve any longer. The office ought to go to the country next time. It has been given to a town man for

the past ten years. Frank Logan talks of running on the Democratic side, and Jim Cowan wants to run against him. But it will take a stronger man than Cowan to beat Frank. You have a good many relatives in different parts of the county, and they are all good men. You are well known, are believed to be wealthy, a moral man, and a very successful farmer. The people think—”

“Don’t, Haberly,” protested Ellet. “If I am all that, I had better stay out of politics. If I am less than that, I don’t deserve an office.”

“Well, this is in earnest. You can have it if you want it. It is a good thing. You think about it for a week or two, and we’ll talk again.”

Then he allowed the conversation to drift in other lines, and, when the rain had ceased, Ellet Grant found his horse in the stalls up there behind the meeting-house, mounted, and rode home.

He did not think Haberly had made any impression upon him. Office seeking was not in his line. It had never been indulged in by any of his family. He knew he would rather go on as he had been—happy at home, making money comfortably, and never catching sight of an enemy—than to have all the political preferment even Haberly might name.

"There's nothing in it," he said, as he swung from the saddle, and led his horse through the big farm gate.

Jim was busy with the feeding, and Ellet helped him, as he always did. When they had finished, the man went away across the fields to his humbler home, and Ellet took up the lantern to go to the house. He was elated in a way different from any he had ever known. This was a fine humor to be in. He enjoyed it. He stopped in front of the bays, put his hand across the manger, crowded full of fragrant hay, and stroked the smooth faces of his team. He put down the lantern again, shoved his hands in his pockets, and stared at the light, wondering how it would seem to be elected to office—must be a charm about it, surely. Lots of men went nearly wild.

His sister stood on the back porch, and called him to supper. Father was reading before an open fire. He never ate more than two meals on Sunday. Mother was rocking contentedly near him, her small figure half lost in the spongy depths of a cushioned chair.

Esther poured the tea, and asked her brother who had been at church, and what they had worn. Alice inquired about the music and the sermon; but Ellet was very unsatisfactory in all his reportings. He called to his father, and told him,

laughing, what Haberly had said. He received no response beyond one of pleased interest, and while the girls were clearing away the dishes he wandered to the library, and found himself wishing there was a book on "County Politics, and How To Master It." He tried to read a little from *The Churchman*, but found Haberly, and Hall, and Frank Logan, and Cowan, all drifting in between the lines.

"Come, this is nonsense," he said, impatient that the vision still invited him. "Alice, let us have some music."

His sisters drew the folding doors between them and the smaller room, where father and mother were sitting. They took up the pieces which had come last from town, and sang them together. He went over to the piano, studied the bass, and added a rich, trained voice to their melody. From the later they passed to the older music, sometimes with the sheet before them, sometimes remembering the lines. The stately harmony of hymns; the deep, impassioned fervor of evangelical praise; the homely words that had hovered about belfries, and echoed through chancels with two centuries of approval upon them—these marked the close of Sunday. Mother pushed open the doors a little, and returned to her cushioned chair. Father had dropped his book, and was listening to his chil-

dren's voices, his whole great soul bathed in thankfulness for countless mercies.

Midnight came upon the farm-house, and found it hushed in sleep, while equi-distant upon either hand stood dual spirits, each named Happiness—one folding the borders of the day just gone, one waiting to usher in to-morrow.

Ellet was dreaming. The ichor of official deities was working in his veins.

CHAPTER II.

THE SPELLING-SCHOOL.

Inside the school-house a motley, noisy crowd was busy with a score of themes. Candles, set on little brackets by the windows, gave light to the room. Around the stove some dozen men, just verging on majority, were chaffing each other, and laughing hoarsely at the banter of a pretty girl who sat on a plain poplar bench in a row of forms. She wore real furs, and seemed a center of attraction. They called her Sadie, and uncouth fellows from across the stove tossed her stentorian badinage, which she repaid with some allusion that aroused a laugh. Ellet's entrance was noted and remarked; and for a time the place was comparatively quiet.

He pushed forward with a sort of rudeness that did not seem to give offense, and, after warming, turned and found a few acquaintances among the men who were seated. Then the general conversation was resumed, a little milder than before; for any stranger brought restraint. Older men filled the benches on the left, and talked with

each other about the weather, Dave Edwards' new barn, and the price of cattle.

On the other side of the house women and girls were gathered. Among them one or two men appeared—brave fellows, gallants, who dared pursue their ladies into the stronghold of the enemy. Boys came in and went out noisily. They were playing some game in the school-yard, and yelled incessantly.

Presently the teacher disengaged himself from a group of rather animated girls, and went to his desk. As he busied himself with some perfunctory preparations, the hub-bub subsided a little. Several men about the stove made a movement to secure seats. A few took off their hats. Then the teacher tapped upon his bell, and every sound within the house was hushed. The boys outside seemed madder than before.

“Charley Clay and Jane Austin will choose up,” announced the teacher; and two persons began bustling around with suspicious tokens of surprise. They could hardly get away from detaining hands. One was a slender man of thirty-five, dressed a little better than a farm hand, but not so well as the teacher; the other was a rosy girl of eighteen, formerly a pupil, and still the champion speller of the district. They came to the desk, and stood facing the teacher, the girl

sober and womanly now, the man all muffled up in dignity.

"The one choosing nearest the page I hold," said the teacher, "gets first choice."

Jane "chose" 240; Charley said "Six hundred," with great gallantry, knowing there could not be so many pages in the book.

"It's 311," announced the teacher in a high-pitched voice, as one having authority; "Miss Austin's first choice." And he laid the book wide open before him, whereat four or five of those nearest pushed forward and scrutinized the page. He might have been cheating.

"Bill Adams," said Jane, and a murmured "Of course!" went round the house. Bill was a noted speller.

"Alice Corse," said Charley, and the people seemed a little surprised. Either Alice's rank as a speller was not known, or some celebrated person near at hand had been overlooked. The two chosen came forward and took seats behind the desk.

"Ed Ogden," said Jane, very quickly, and there was a ripple of assent, as if the girl had scored a point. The boys outside abandoned their sport, and came clattering in, snatching hats from uncombed heads as they neared the door, and stamping to seats with an awful tread.

Charley Clay waited a moment, and then called "Effie Wheeler."

"Ella Wheeler," said Miss Austin, instantly, with an accent on the baptismal name. Evidently here was a family of spellers.

"Jed Brooks."

"Doc Lough."

"Ed Hendrickson."

"Mrs. Hamilton."

It was the first recognition of the family tie, and a suppressed titter directed attention to a buxom young woman with a white bonnet, who crowded past her seatmates and went forward to her place at Miss Austin's side. Mrs. Hamilton was evidently a bride, and this was her first public appearance in that newer relation.

So the choosing went on. Each person took position on the bench which ran all about the school-room, giving place to nothing but the door. A few said "Wish to be excused," in an unfamiliar way; and these were always passed. At length all who cared to spell had been chosen, and had taken their places in one of the long lines.

The teacher had all this time stood at his desk, with one elbow resting easily upon it, and one foot crossed upon the other, in an attitude of studied grace. He held a spelling-book, and

thrummed the leaves. Jane and Charley found places at the heads of their respective lines.

"I will appoint Seth Reed and John Rhinehart to keep tally," was the next official announcement; and these two, non-combatants, were supplied with slates on which they entered double-entry accounts by drawing a straight line from top to bottom, and writing "Jane" on one side, and "Charley" on the other.

Then the spelling began. The teacher pronounced a word in turn to those on either side, and every time a miss was scored down went a white mark against Jane's or Charley's account. After proceeding some ten minutes the teacher turned over his book and hand lamp to a visiting pedagogue—a courtesy always extended.

Twenty minutes of spelling, and then the teacher resumed his sway and announced an intermission. He called for the reports of the tally-keepers, and when one said Jane's side had missed more words than had Charley's, a little clapping of hands in the camp of the latter proclaimed the sweets of victory. The other scorer could not make his figures quite agree with those just published. Great interest was awakened by his perplexity. Poor Jane came forward, claiming a suspension of judgment. But when the tardy accountant said his slate showed she had lost by

thirty-four words instead of thirty, the poor girl retired in a whirlwind of confusion.

As soon as the recess was taken the troop of boys broke from the room as if it were a prison. They ran and leaped and yelled about the house like spirits from Bedlam. Older youths, and even adults, joined the crowds without. They formed a ring by joining hands, and round about it two figures flitted, while all the others sang:

King William was King George's son,
And at the royal race he run;
Upon his breast he wore a star
Which was won in time of war.

A girl was running about the circle, pursued by a youth who carried a handkerchief. She had dropped it behind him in passing, and he broke from the line to answer her challenge. If he shall overtake her before she make the circuit and reach the place he occupied, a kiss will reward him—after a struggle. How swiftly he ran! How the girl sped! How Ellet, looking on from a distance, held his breath and hoped for her—no, for him! Now she is safe. No, he caught her; but she was nearly home, and claimed a little grace. He was not a rigid collector, and so released her and went forward with the handkerchief, while half the gathered boys taunted him.

“Cowardy calf!” they cried, in great derision. He dropped the handkerchief behind his pet divinity, and she had to be shown how favored she was among women. She snatched the cambric with great haste, but there her hurry ended. The chase was a mild one. He could not force her to catch him, and so stepped into the circle, and the song went forward:

Go, look to the east; go, look to the west;
Go, look to the one that you love best.
If he's not here to take your part,
Go, choose another with all your heart.

Presently the school bell rang again, and then the tumbling through that narrow door suggested Noah's famed menagerie, frightened at the flood. So far as possible every person took again the seat he held before recess, and order was restored.

Mary Green, with great solemnity, recited a comic poem. Billy Etherby, chubby and rollicking in ten years of health, made far more comic a doleful strain about the stars. Hetty Webster read a paper, full of allusions to “a certain young man,” or “a girl from Bruce's Lake;” full of queries as to “why Bert Osburn wears his good clothes all the time,” each of which was listened to with gaping interest, and laughed at immoderately in the pauses wise Hetty made.

Then the real event of the evening came.

"Stand up, and spell down," commanded the teacher; and all the chosen found their feet amid a din of shuffling.

"Balcony."

The word was fired at Jane Austin with a distinctness that defied misunderstanding.

"Barony."

It was Charley Clay's turn, and he spelled the word with elaborate plainness. It was a sort of challenge and response.

"Fallacy."

Jane's second spelled and missed. "F-a-l-l-a-s-y," he said, then covered his face in shame, for all the crowded house held its breath in astonishment. He sat down, and the word was passed across the room. Charley Clay exulted a little. It was first blood for him. Ten minutes saw as many spellers go down before some stubborn words, and on the third round the teacher pronounced "million."

"M-i-l-l-i-o-n," spelled a girl, sweetly.

"Bilious," said the teacher to Ellet.

"B-i-double l—" Then he hesitated. Surely there was only one l. He was confused, and finished the word: "i-o-u-s."

"Next!" exclaimed the teacher, with judicial severity.

Twenty minutes saw all the spellers in their seats save four, who stood like lonesome teeth in

a hard-used comb. They spelled rapidly, without hesitation, and with a constant undercurrent of defiance for the other side. Charley Clay and Alice Corse stood alone against Jane Austin and Bill Adams. In a moment of weakness poor Charley went down. Some young men near the door were conversing aloud.

"Keep order, there," warned the teacher. The trespass was modified, but not abated. The teacher strolled back, pronouncing and listening conscientiously. The youths grew bolder, and laughed aloud.

"Shut up, or get out!" The master was furious. He towered like a fate before the head and front of the offending. The youth "shut up," but presently he went out also, though he preserved a discreet care as to his movements.

Five minutes more and Jane Austin was alone, facing her fair antagonist. The interest was intense. Every word pronounced was followed from the teacher to the speller, and when it had dropped, correctly framed, from ruby lips, the people waited breathlessly for the next assault. There was no defiance in the spelling now: it was prompt, precise, mechanical. But a nervous strain was upon the audience. Age and youth, gallant and girl, were all attention. It was 10 o'clock, and these two seemed determined to spell cor-

rectly till daylight came. The teacher was looking through the book for difficult words. He wished to end the agony.

"Sieve," "seine," "frankincense," all the array was marshalled, and the fair young woman who had spelled so glibly every harder word tripped on "until," and sat down, crushed with a double l.

Alice Corse spelled it easily, and looked to the teacher. No, it was late enough. He would not try to spell her down. There was a little clapping of hands, a little flutter of triumph from Charley Clay's side, and then a moment's pause, while the teacher thanked his audience for its good behavior, invited "each and every one to return two weeks from to-night," and opened the door with all the grace of a Chesterfield—grace that changed to rage as a huge log, stood upon the step and leaned against the door by the ejected young man, came tumbling into the room.

But he was helpless. His reign was over. School was dismissed, and he was plain Jim Fennel now. The log was removed, while rude boys shouted their glee.

Youths gathered about the door, chaffing each other, holding their places against much shoving this way and that. As the crowd filed slowly out, girls would see an elbow projected into that narrow

lane by some Darby who hoped that this, his Joan, might be kind to-night.

“Can I see you safe home?”

Month-old derision sprang from her refusal, and a nest of mad rogues proclaimed his scorn. But some were fortunate. Fair girl with hood and tippet, framing a face of guilelessness and health, would drop a timid hand upon that awkward arm, and hurry through the door before the peal of ribaldry could come; hurry into the highway, then walk more slowly home, pausing at the doorway, giving goodbye again and again, then living in ecstasy till the silent winter night erased all wakefulness, and poured a flood of dreams about her bed.

While the youthful crowd was filing out, Ellet shook hands with the older and prosier voters about the stove, and shook them warmly.

“Can’t spell much, can you, Ellet?” laughed one jolly old fellow of the opposite family of political faith.

“I always try to follow the million,” said the younger man, and his hearers enjoyed the moderate jest.

“Come home with me, and stay all night,” said Dave Edwards, gray-haired, but vigorous as any of his boys.

“No, you better stay with us to-night, Ellet,” interposed an uncle. But young Mr. Grant considered the first invitation the better one, and after becoming hesitation, accepted it. He could count on his uncle’s vote and influence in the coming campaign, while some labor might be needed in the Edwards vineyard.

CHAPTER III.

BEGINNING THE CANVASS.

In the language of the *Republican*, the "political pot was boiling." That was a phrase grown hoary with age in Indiana. Ellet Grant had concluded to seek the service of the public, and he had come to the spelling-school chiefly because it was a good way to begin the canvass. He believed he could secure the nomination for sheriff, and was comfortably confident of an election in that event. True, the party majority was very small, and likely at any time to be smaller, or even overturned entirely by a good national nomination on the other side, or by some potent local issue. The Democrats used to carry it with Hendricks whenever they chose to run him; Tilden carried the county in 1876, and Hancock again in 1880. One other time, when the opposition raised the cry that the auditor's books ought to be opened, they carried it again from top to bottom. Now and then a treasurer, clerk or recorder from the enemy's camp had broken through the lines, and won an election from an

unsavory nominee, even while the rest of the ticket was saved. Added to this was the undoubted personal strength of Frank Logan, upon whom the Democrats had already fixed as their nominee for sheriff. But spite of it all, Ellet did not fear defeat. The party's normal majority, the recent fairly good record in county affairs, and his own strength in a large and influential circle of relatives, would overcome, he believed, any possibility of defeat.

So he sauntered out into the night with his friends, almost the last to leave the school-room, and they all walked slowly home. The farmer's wife was abed, but her good nature was proof against trespass, and the noisy entry into the house was in no wise tempered.

"William, go down cellar and get some apples and cider," said the farmer, as he drew up the chairs to the fireplace. "We keep the stove back there to warm the room," he said, rather gaily, "but I burn a fireplace myself, because I like it."

While William was absent in the caverns under the house, young David, last born and favorite of the patriarch, invaded the kitchen, and returned with the fried cakes that hold in their curling brown sides a key to rural felicity.

"I don't want no glasses to drink cider out of," said the farmer, noting with gratification that

Ellet had chosen a tincup, and was helping himself to a brimming measure of the beverage. "The boys and girls like glasses better, and that's all right; but I take more comfort out of the old ways."

The four young men sat with their father and his guest, in a semi-circle about the blazing hickory upon the hearth, chatting with each other, or interjecting, with a pleasant deference, a question or comment in the principal talk. The late luncheon was nearly at an end, when Ellet turned to his host and launched the message he had come to bring:

"Uncle Dave, I am thinking of making the race for sheriff this year. What do you think?"

The boys were all attention to that. Three of them were voters, and the fourth would miss it by so short a time that, barring the simple act of suffrage, he, too, was a man.

"Well," drawled Edwards, growing serious at once, "I dono how the land lays. Who else is out?"

"No one on our side. The Democrats will nominate Frank Logan, I hear."

"Well, you ought to make a good race, Ellet." This with feeling, and a frank facing of the younger man. "But it will cost more than it comes to, won't it?"

“Oh, I think not. It will cost nothing for a corruption fund—that’s certain. I believe a man ought to be chosen for office because the people want him; not because he is the most successful purchaser of votes. I shall make the canvass simply on my merits, and if the Republicans want some other man there, that settles it. I will get out of the way.”

“Good enough! good enough!” warmly. Then with less feeling, “How do you find things so far?”

“Well, honest, Uncle Dave, I find men inclined to encourage me. They tell me wherever I have gone it is time the out-of-town districts had some representation in the court-house, and they even seem to think I am the man.” And he laughed a little, to wash away the vanity.

“Good enough, um-m-m. Well, if that clock aint striking ’leven. You’re tired, Ellet. We better all go to bed.”

And so the matter ended; but the candidate felt hopeful of the support of the Edwards family. Coming here for the night was a good idea. One of the boys took a candle and led him to the big spare room. There was an ancient chest of drawers, surmounted with a swinging mirror that had been broken across some chilly night by the too ardent heat of the candle. There was a pic-

ture of "Washington Crossing the Delaware," and a flashy print representing "A Home in the West." The floor was covered with a carpet of rag, woven long ago, but still untarnished; its reds and blues and greens and yellows appearing with that method known as "hit and miss." The paper window blinds were drawn exactly half way down, and back of them swept white muslin curtains, relieved with red rosettes and gaudy feathers. The mammoth bed was sentineled with four tall posts. It held an open net of crossing ropes that creaked as he clambered between the soft wool sheets, adjusting itself to his weight, but rising to complaint again as he turned from side to side, exulting, fearing, hoping, planning for the future. The great clock by the chimney down stairs invoked attention by a premonitory whirr, and then tolled off twelve.

Ellet sank to sleep with visions of a following both numerous and earnest, strong enough to bear down any opposition he might encounter when he came to town.

CHAPTER IV.

FIRST LESSONS IN GOVERNMENT.

One Sunday afternoon in May, Esther Grant walked home from church with young John Haberly. If she had followed her own inclination in the matter she never would have invited him, for Haberly did not enjoy the most savory of reputations in certain moral lines; but the ante-convention campaign was now open, and this was a vastly useful man to Ellet. He stood as the intermediary between the staunch purity of that young man's political methods and the more practical rules and elastic consciences of the workers. He was handsome, acute, possessed of something resembling culture, and was undoubted authority, when he chose to express himself, on young Grant's chances for success.

"Oh, Ellet is doing nicely," he said, in answer to the girl's inquiry. "He is popular all over the county, and would have no opposition even in town, but for the notion they entertain there that his father is too strong a temperance man."

"Can one be too strong a temperance man?" asked Esther, in surprise.

“With politicians, yes. They urge that his father is not true to the party; that he trains with the Prohibitionists, and that Beal was defeated two years ago through your father’s efforts for the cold-water ticket.”

“You certainly do not blame father for favoring temperance, do you?”

“Not at all. But active work for that party may put a man where he can ask few favors of any other.”

All that was good and noble in the girl rebelled at the doctrine. A Moloch could not be more merciless than that. She was as sure that her father was right as that the decalogue was wise. Not a shadow of doubt could enter her heart. If, then, he were right, if wine be a mocker and strong drink be raging, what need a man fear for opposing them? Why should he—how could he be punished? And who dare visit that wrath on his children? Was it not enough that he was right?

But she said little of all this to Haberly. She was bound up in the hope of her brother’s success, and had determined to win a stronger support from this ally. She had learned in the conversation at home that Haberly could do things no one else dared attempt; that he was very influential even among church members, and yet maintained

a strong place in the less critical ranks of the politicians. He was a man who could preside at a temperance meeting one night, and ask for a reduction of the dramshop license the next. He could make a telling speech to the graduating class on Friday, and extend all the courtesies of the city to visiting bacchanals on Saturday. He could sit in his pew in the morning, smooth shaven and genteel, attentive to the sermon and not neglectful of the contribution box, and in the afternoon could open a bottle of wine in Sautern's back room, and play seven-up to see who should pay for it. He was strongly opposed to vice and drunkenness, yet unalterable in his defense of license.

He sat in the cool parlor of Wesley Grant's big farm-house after dinner, and enjoyed to the full the entertainment of his host's charming daughters. Esther's loveliness, her vivacity, her mental endowments, surprised Haberly. But he turned from her to a deeper wonder at the charms of her younger sister. Alice just touched the borders of womanhood. Her native talents had been trained and polished in the best of schools. She was devoted to music, and made each Sabbath afternoon a season of melody. Whether she caught her sister's spirit of service in Ellet's cause, one could not say; but surely her voice never rose so sweetly to the clear heights of song, and her hands

never drew from the keys strains so entrancing.

"You have outdone yourself, Alice," said her father proudly, as he left the parlor to the younger people.

Afternoon had drifted into evening. Wesley Grant strolled from the house, his wife beside him, and looked over the farm. Ever since they had owned a home this had been one of the weekly ordinances. They wandered through a mossy gate by the garden, and passed into the orchard.

"That russet isn't dead, after all," said the farmer; and then, continuing in the half musing way he always employed in these rambles: "The row of pearmain is looking well; too much sod about them, though. The boys don't plow as I used to. Good mind to sow the orchard down in oats next year, just to get it cultivated. These old trees are going. Can't expect much more from them. We set them out the spring Ellet was born. You held them straight, and I packed the soil about the roots. What a heap of comfort we have had from this orchard."

At the farther side they went through the bars that had long served occasional use as a gate, and passed down the east lane between the fields—the woman silent, almost content; the man talking on as if his thoughts became audible on these Sunday strolls.

"Meadow getting pretty short already, and this only May. We are needing rain. Better put that field in clover another year. Wheat coming on splendidly. Boys have this piece about ready for corn. Guess I will plant that York State seed here; it matures quicker than our larger kind." Then he hummed a little of Alice's last song, and continued:

"Did a big thing when we hauled that sand hill into this swamp; raise pretty good crops on both places now. Must have the boys move this fence next winter, and throw these fields together. Since we got the woods pasture we don't need so many fences. House and barns look pretty good from here." They had reached the farther fields, and were crossing to the west lane. "Don't know as good farm buildings in the county; but the granary ought to be painted. Pretty good house; pretty good house. Pretty good children in it. Wish Ellet wouldn't run for sheriff."

"So do I."

This from the wife—promptly, fervently. Then she was silent again. Somehow, Wesley Grant was silent after that. They strolled back through the west lane, they looked at the stock, stroked the sides of the large, gentle, odorous cows; repelled advances of nibbling sheep; smoothed the silken coats of the horses that were

enjoying their one day in seven; inspected the poultry-houses whose tenants were already retired, and counted the nests where hermit hens—misanthropes—sat silent on comfortless eggs, expectant of chickens as comfortless.

Then into the barn, across unlittered floors, under mows yet stored with hay, and past cribs yet rich with corn; looking into stalls where comfort waited, winter and summer. Then across the grassy yard as the sun went down, and so to their bench on the porch. Had they worked years to make this home? Were their hands hard and their hair white and their frames stiffened by unceasing labor? Yes, but eyes and ears and brain were full of payment now. Hear those voices in the parlor. Know that loving children are happy there. See the strong horses, the smooth cattle, the contented sheep; hear that melody of milking-time—white streams against bright tin; see the last ray of sunshine come like a flaming herald across the fields, the woods, the orchard, till it sweeps to them and touches their very feet with beauty, then vanishes, and brings soft twilight to receive the dying day.

See that black cloud on the very verge of the world, with his foldings of silver, his centre of burnished gold.

CHAPTER V.

HOSTILITIES DECLARED.

Next morning John Haberly met Sautern in the market, where each had come for the day's supply of meat. They walked away together.

"Saut," said the polished man, "I was out to Pretty Lake Church yesterday, and went home to dinner with Ellet Grant's folks. He is going to be a candidate before the convention."

"Yes, I know it. Wants to be sheriff." This somewhat surlily.

"And I shouldn't wonder if he succeeded. Ellet has been doing some pretty good work. And then he has relatives all over the county. He would make a strong race."

"Oh, anybody will make a strong race."

"Well, I don't know. If the Democrats nominate Frank Logan, and it looks as if they would, we don't want to take anything for granted."

"If we can't elect anybody we can't elect nobody." The saloon-keeper was not in a pleasant mood.

“What do you mean by that?” asked Haberly, for the epigrams of Sautern were sometimes very profound.

“If we are not strong enough to elect our man—no matter who he is—just because he *is* our man, we are not strong enough to elect anybody. It is not a question of candidates; it is a question of party.”

“In my opinion we are not strong enough to elect a man regardless of who he is. Recollect we lost Beal two years ago because too many Republicans were down on him.”

“Yes,” retorted Sautern, hotly, “and Beal was beaten by this same Ellet Grant’s father. What right has he to come up and ask for favors?”

“Well, Beal was a pretty rocky nomination, Saut,” said Haberly, persuasively.

“But he was nominated, wasn’t he? That’s enough for you and me to know. I’m agin it. I tell you now, John, I’m agin Ellet’s nomination all the time.”

They had reached Sautern’s side gate. He opened it angrily, and walked up to the house, in the evident mood of a power to be placated. Haberly wanted to stand there and argue awhile. He did not like to leave so potent an actor in an ill humor. But he could do or say no more. He went on to his home, where his sisters awaited

him, and spent the morning after breakfast in the barn, where he pretended to be busy with a harness, but where he was in fact sitting on an inverted half-bushel basket, studying out some way to enlist the workers without sacrificing Grant's candidacy. He knew if Sautern were unopposed he would run Cowan for sheriff, and Jim could not be elected. The one redeeming thing about him was an honorable discharge from the army of the United States. He was past middle life, had been a member of the legislature, and was "favorably mentioned" for re-election; but his course in the house and his record at home would bar him from any election, no matter who backed him. His public and private life were such that good people simply did not want Jim Cowan for any office.

All these things hung very heavily upon Haberly's mind, and along toward noon he washed his hands and went down town. He entered the hardware store, and talked the matter over with Sims, of the county central committee.

"Oh, you are worrying too much," said the merchant. "Sautern is valuable, but he don't run the county. If Ellet gets the delegates he can have the nomination. He has nearly a month of time to work yet. The way things lay now that office ought to go to the country this year, but no

one can tell how it will turn out. As a member of the committee of course I have nothing to say; but don't you be getting mad at Sautern or anybody else. What we all want is harmony."

While they spoke, a man of sixty years, upright, rugged and strong, with the beard of a patriarch and the eye of a boy, entered the store.

"Hello, Haberly," he cried, cheerily. "Hello, men. My boys want two more of your plow points for the iron beam: one with cutter, one without. Seems as if this summer's plowing was costing more than the land was worth. Haberly, thank your stars you live in town."

"I'd thank my stars if I owned a farm like yours, Wesley," retorted the younger man. "The dinner I ate there yesterday tastes good yet."

While the clerk was filling the farmer's orders, Haberly sounded him on his views of his son's candidacy, and the campaign in general.

"Well, I don't want Ellet to run," said the old man; "but he concluded to make the race, and—well, he's of age, you know," laughingly.

"Some of the boys in town talk of running Cowan against him," said Haberly, as a feeler. The old man looked very keenly at the smooth junior, his bright eyes twinkling.

"You want me to say something. May be I shouldn't do it; but you men know I always

“speak my mind. Cowan can't be elected. I wouldn't insure Ellet's election; but he will stand as far ahead of Cowan as you will, John, ahead of Sautern.” Haberly removed his hat, and bowed. “I suppose your heelers here in town will oppose Ellet because I fought Beal two years ago. Yet I was right. Beal died of delirium tremens less than a month after election. He was in no way fit to be auditor of this county, and the man that beat him—barring politics—is without a single objection.”

“Did you work for the man that beat Beal?” asked the central committeeman.

“No, I worked for the Prohibition candidate, and he got enough Republican votes to show you fellows that decency in nominations is the surest way to success in elections.”

Several men had drifted into the store, some to buy, some to listen.

“Would you oppose Cowan's election in the same way if he were nominated?” asked Sims.

“I certainly should. It isn't good politics for me to say so, but I give you fair warning, Cowan or no man like him can be elected in this county. If things have come to that pass in the county seat, better make the offices appointive at once, and give Sautern the patronage.”

Something of a laugh, a little of applause greeted the sentiment. Wesley Grant made a few remarks about the weather, paid for his hardware, asked the price of clover seed, and went out, sturdy and unimpaired as he came in.

Haberly rocked vigorously on a deal chair, chewing a toothpick and trying to assume a face of lesser gravity.

"Wish we hadn't waked him up," he said to Sims.

"Might as well have it out one time as another," said the committeeman, and he looked across the street at Sautern's saloon, where the proprietor was already receiving a report of the farmer's expressions—report that won the newsbearer a generous drink from the proprietor's own bottle.

CHAPTER VI.

HABERLY AND ESTHER.

The day for the primaries was at hand. They would be held on Friday, and the following Monday was the date for the county convention. The Democratic nominations would not occur until two weeks later. It was thought by the shrewder of that party that as they must of necessity be on the defensive, some advantage might be gained by waiting. Furthermore, the leaders felt assured the fight for sheriff, on the Republican side, lay between Ellet Grant and James Cowan. On their own Frank Logan was conceded the nomination. Should they hold their convention first, and name their man, the Republicans might be afraid to choose Cowan, owing to his bad record, and the enmity against him in the out townships. Ellet Grant would give them a harder struggle, and they were not in position to invite difficulties. Beyond the sheriff they had really little or no hope of electing any one, but they would name a full ticket, and were already working like beavers. Taken first and last, the

situation had never been quite so interesting to the politicians, and no farmer was so base he could not entertain at least four candidates a week.

Thursday evening John Haberly drove out to the Grant farm for a final consultation with his friend. Ellet was not at home. He had gone over to Uncle Dave Edwards', to arrange some details for to-morrow's work, but would soon return. Esther met the politician, and invited him to a seat on the broad porch.

"Be honest, Mr. Haberly," she said; "have you been to tea?"

"Miss Esther, I cannot tell a lie. I have not, and am hungry as a harvest hand."

"Then you shall have a treat. Sit here and tell father about politics till I call you."

"You are not abandoning me to starvation, and your father to torture, are you?" he asked.

"No, truly. You shall have your supper. And as for father, he will take care of himself, I think."

She went gaily into the house and prepared for the entertainment of the guest. The young man found Wesley not so easily approached on the subject of politics as might have been expected. They all knew his position, and he had nothing to alter or explain. He hoped Ellet would be nominated, now that he had entered the field, but

would clearly have preferred that his family remain uncontaminated; for with all deference to Haberly, in whom he recognized an active manager and a passably clean man, the sturdy old farmer had little use for politicians. No one related to him had ever asked for office, and this was a matter of keen gratification when he saw fit to protest against some odious nomination or measure. He held that honest men could not make a living in politics; that those who managed canvasses and kept within the law must have ample means outside the revenue from parties. It was his contention that official preferment was largely bartered and sold by the men who could control the most votes, to the men who would pay the most for them.

"What men like me must do," he said, "is to stay out entirely and watch you fellows. While you rule well, we can let you go; but when you abuse power, we must take it away from you."

Haberly had treated the matter lightly, assuring his host that parties were necessary, and this fact made management also necessary.

"Of course we do a shady thing now and then," he admitted, laughingly; "but the Democrats are so corrupt we have to. Fight the devil with fire, you know."

"Would you fight Niagara with water?" asked the farmer.

"No, probably not."

"Well, then, don't talk of fighting the devil with fire. He can stand that longer than you can. Fight the devil with purity. He hasn't a shield in all hell thick enough to turn one dart of truth. Believe me, John, if you have a devil to fight, honesty—not treachery; soberness—not rum; light—not darkness, is what you want to use."

"Mr. Haberly! Mr. Haberly!" called Esther from the dining room, "come in to tea. I heard father using some of the warmest words. You two must not get angry. Look at that table. How can men quarrel about a thing like politics?"

He stopped at the door and lifted his hands in a comic amazement. China and silver that an earlier Grant had hidden at the family home in Maryland when the British burned Washington; linen that Esther had spun and Alice had woven; tea that heated an urn as old as the Northwest Territory, and sugar that came from the depths of the forest when winter grew tender in the arms of spring; bread that proved the housewife, and butter as fragrant as clover—all this he saw. But chiefest of all to the sated palate was a heaping dish of crimson cherries—the first of the season.

"Wherever did you get them?" he gasped.

"In our little garden," said the girl, enjoying his tribute to her taste and care. Haberly grew impressive.

"Miss Grant," he said, "if I could sit down once a day to a feast like that, I would never touch politics again; never—not a single pol."

"I shall tell your sisters that you reviled their housekeeping."

"You may; and in the light of this spread, they would tell you I was justified."

She poured his tea, and presided at the little table; she told him bits of history about the service, and gave him glimpses into a home life more pure and happy than he had thought to be possible. She drew from him his views of her brother's prospects, and when he had finished his meal, permitted him to sit in the room while she pinned on a broad apron and "did the tea things."

Throughout it all the charm of music came to them from the parlor. Alice had taken her place at the piano, and was closing her day with the melody suited to her mood. To-night it was almost pensive, and the faithful fingers that had been busy since sunrise in the homely cares of life, touched gently, lovingly, the springs of sound, mingling the minor chords with richer strains, as sorrow must temper the hey-day of joy. Com-

fort came as the moments passed, and when Esther led the guest from the dining room, Alice was reveling in the easy, old-time music they loved so well.

"Come and sing," she said, without pausing from her prelude. No lamp had been lighted. Twilight is welcome in the farm-house. They stood behind her and joined their voices until, indeed,

The night was filled with music,
And the cares that infested the day
Had folded their tents, like the Arabs,
And silently stolen away.

"Ellet is late," said Wesley Grant, as the young people walked out on the porch.

"If I knew where Edwards lived I would drive over, and go on to town," said Haberly. "I ought to be there now."

"You turn north at the brick school-house, you know," said Esther.

John Haberly had an inspiration.

"You get into my buggy," he said to the girl; "go with me to Edwards', unless we meet Ellet on the way, and then come back with him. I would get lost if I undertook to find the way."

It did not occur to Esther that John Haberly, practical politician, knew that road and all other roads in Fairview County. There was just one

instant of hesitation, and then Wesley Grant said: "You will most likely meet him on the way." And she took that for assent. Ten minutes later she was driving swiftly behind Haberly's team, past the rippling fields of ripening wheat, between broad acres of springing corn, under as mellow a moonlight as ever flooded the fields of Andalusia.

They met Ellet half way to the Edwards farm, and Haberly listened to the last report and gave his final instructions. Then Esther was lifted to her brother's side, and with him returned home. He was sanguine of success in the primaries now, and after that depended on the strength he felt sure of developing to silence any antagonism in town. He was so full of the affair that he paid slight attention to Esther. If her mood was changed, he did not notice it. If she had sent her thoughts roving in unknown fields, it was not evident to him. If simple contact with a man who did wrong—if a certain sympathy with him—shocked her less than formerly, her brother was too busy now to see it. The primaries must be carried.

CHAPTER VII.

THE GANG DEFIED.

John Haberly drove on to town, and the first man he met as he stepped from his buggy was Sautern.

"Where you been?" demanded the dictator.

"Out at Grant's."

"That fool Ellet still think he is running for sheriff?"

"Yes, he seems to. How are things here?"

This last in compliment to Sautern. Haberly knew how things were quite as well as the other, but he had often found it pay to feign ignorance and flatter a fool.

"Just as they was. John, it aint no use for you to try and nominate that man."

"Make a good candidate. Make a good sheriff, too," said Haberly, as he tied his horses in front of the saloon, and lifted their collars to free the sharp hairs of the manes. Then the two men walked into the bar-room, and stood at the far corner, Sautern talking earnestly, as a man sure of the right, yet inclined to be charitable to one who could not read as he could.

“Good enough sheriff, mebbby, but I tell you it won’t do. Now, just look at it, John. Here he is—a man that never goes into a saloon; a man that turns up his nose at the boys. He fixes up in a tailor-made suit of clothes, and drives a fancy team into town of a Sunday, and sets up there in church as proud as a jaybird. He’s a hymn-book feller and—”

“I go to church myself, you know,” Haberly reminded him.

“Yes, but it don’t hurt you, John. You make yourself solid with the boys, and you keep yourself solid. They know it don’t mean no harm with you; but Ellet’s too fancy. He’s a sort of holy-water man—thinks he purifies whoever he touches. Now, he won’t put up no money in here. When the boys asks for a drink on his account, must I say: ‘He ain’t buyin’ nothin’?’ Why, they’ll say: ‘Damn such a candidate!’ They won’t whoop it up for him. They won’t vote for him. Now, you go around this town to-night, and you’ll find Jim Cowan solid with every last man of them. He put up a fifty with me yesterday, and he says: ‘Saut,’ says he, ‘I don’t want no friend of mine to be out nothing on my account. Take this and set out something for the boys.’ He done the same thing at Ringer’s and the same thing

at Steele's; only he only give them twenty-five apiece."

"Put up a hundred before the primaries?"

"That's what he done."

"Where did he get it?"

"That's none of my business, and it's none of your business."

"It is some of my business. He has owed me house rent for the past seven years, and told me just last Saturday he didn't have a dollar."

"You was tryin' to squeeze him just before convention, was you?"

"I was trying to get my own."

"Well, you'll get your own, as you call it, when he's elected—just the same as I will get mine—and not a minute before." Sautern was dropping his friendly tone. It had not seemed to win Haberly. He was getting ugly. "You can't do any good with a man that cuts the saloons. If you don't know that you don't know anything about politics."

"Ellet hasn't cut the saloons," protested Haberly.

"Yes he has. He passed my place four times Saturday, and never come in once. No more does he go in any place. Ringer and Steele feels just as I do. You go over there to the bar and ask them fellows what they think of Ellet Grant

for sheriff. Just try it. Let me tell you another thing. Now, less than a month ago, old Wesley Grant went into Sims' hardware store to get a plow point. They got to talking about Jim Cowan running for sheriff, and he—old Wesley—ups and says if Jim is nominated he will bolt the ticket, just as he did when Beal was nominated two years ago. That aint goin' to do. The party don't warm much to a man that kicks it every time he gets into a bad temper."

"Sautern," said Haberly suddenly, "suppose Ellet Grant is nominated without sweetening you up any; will you support him?"

"No, I won't. You put that down strong. I won't. No more will Ringer or Steele. He's awful proud of the church endorsement, and the lodge endorsement, and the sewing society endorsement. Let's see them elect him."

"But you are doing just what you blame Wesley for doing."

"Well, that's all right. I ain't askin' no offices. I'm giving them out."

"You *are*?"

"Yes, I am."

"*You* are?"

"That's what I said."

John Haberly looked the rotund man over from head to foot, then walked a few steps forward and

back, his hands in his pockets, his hat pushed up. He wanted to quench that egotism, but was too smooth a politician to needlessly anger any man on the eve of a convention. He thought he would try the fellows at the bar.

"Come up and have something, Saut," he said.

The saloon-keeper stood beside him, and each poured half a gill of liquor into a thick glass, swallowed it, drank some water to quench its fire, and then Haberly turned to the group of revelers. They were standing close together, talking very earnestly and rather noisily—about nothing. The bar-keeper took the price of two drinks from Haberly's dollar, and gave him the change.

"Charley, what do you think of Ellet Grant's chances for the nomination?" he asked of the man nearest him—Charley, the worker.

This person was carpenter by theory, and a vote-procurer by practice. He had organized the "Tanners" in 1872; the "Flambeau Club" in 1876, and the "Boys in Blue" in 1880.

"Nomination for what?" asked Charley, blankly. The rest were listening.

"Sheriff," said Haberly.

"What—him? For sheriff? That feller? Well I should say not." And he resumed his story to the boys.

"Why not?" asked Haberly, calmly lighting a cigar.

"Why not? 'Cause there's nothing in him. What's he ever done for the party?"

"Voted for it, every time."

"Voted!" with withering contempt. "Did he ever put up a dollar? Did he ever go with the boys? Naw—he's too nice. He can't get nothin'. This aint Mississippi."

Haberly blew a big cloud of smoke away up toward the ceiling, watched it a moment, and then said, without a change in his tone:

"Have something with me, Charley. Boys, have something."

They all complied. Charley softened a little. He favored Haberly with his full front; he had been standing edgewise, and talking over his shoulder.

"Ellet's a good man, John," he conceded. But it was as if he had said: "Ellet is six feet tall;" or "Ellet has fair health."

Haberly nodded, removed his cigar, and blew up another billow of smoke to the ceiling.

"Drives a dam elegant team," Charley continued. He was becoming suave. He was in a receptive mood. Perhaps Haberly was commissioned to do something for the boys.

"Pretty good team," assented the politician. Then he gathered up his change, bowed to the group with the grace that had made him successful, and sauntered to the door. The proprietor followed him.

"You see how it is, John," said the latter, as if a finality had been reached. "No booze, no boost."

"Sautern, you don't know how strong Ellet is. The people think this is their year. Now, we have been making some mistakes the past few campaigns. Our clerk is an awful weak sister, and our surveyor has cost the tax-payers a heap of money on account of the errors in those ditch cases. The Democrats have been naming good men, and gaining a little every year since 1878. I honestly believe if we make bad nominations this year we will be beaten."

"Cowan aint a bad nomination. And, if he was, I'm tired of this everlasting colic about the people. Damn the people! I am in favor of nominating whoever the politicians want, and cramming the ticket down the throats of the people. Who are they, any way? A lot of old mud sills who would like to drive all business except the churches out of town. The politicians have to put up for the party, run its machinery and elect its men. If they didn't, nobody would be

elected. They ought to have something to say about who should have the offices."

"Seems as if they do have something to say," said Haberly, calmly, jingling his loose change, and looking down street.

"You bet they have—and they are going to have more. The delegates will come up here uninstructed Monday, and I am going into that convention to down this saintly foolishness. Sober or drunk, solvent or broke, capable or not, I am for Cowan—and he'll be nominated, too. Mark what I tell you."

"I have a great mind to teach you a lesson, Sautern. You are getting too big. What do you think the voters are?"

"Yams!" shouted Sautern. "Yams—that's what. You go ahead and teach me a lesson. Just go ahead and try it. I dare you, John. I dare you."

Haberly regarded the inflamed face and bloated figure before him in perfect calmness for a moment. Then he lifted his cigar to his lips, took a long pull, and shrouded the big man in smoke.

"I'll just do it," he said with energy, and walked away before Sautern came out of eclipse.

CHAPTER VIII.

ELLET'S FIRST HUMILIATION.

Haberly went down to Ringer's, and found the Cowan sentiment even stronger there. Then he went to Steele's. Cowan himself was there, although it was the smallest politics factory in town. The aspirant for sheriff's honors was well dressed, was smoking a good cigar, and was entertaining a laughing group with a tremendously funny account of how a lot of Johnny Rebs acted when they saw the first Union army. The exquisite humor of his narrative was seasoned—not to say preserved—in alcohol; for wine, malt and spirituous liquors in quantities less than a quart, were being drunk on the premises, as the license directed, and all at his expense.

“Here's John Haberly, gentlemen. Gentlemen, John Haberly—Colonel Haberly—a hero and a scholar. I believe he is also a good judge of liquor. John, what'll you take?”

“Oh, a little rum and gum,” said John; by which the bar-keeper understood Mr. Haberly's palate would be satisfied only with a delicate mix-

ture of spirits and sirup. "Here's to everybody," he said, advancing his glass.

"No, you don't," interposed one of the henchmen. "'Here's to Captain Jim Cowan for sheriff,' that's what you want to drink here."

A moment's pause served to fix all eyes on the manager. He looked around upon them quietly, then lifted his glass, and said:

"Here's to Captain Jim Cowan, the man who, in the hour of his nation's peril, bared his arm and presented his body, a living bulwark against the advance of implacable foes. One, two, three, drink!" And before any one could protest he had not endorsed the Captain's candidacy, twenty chins were elevated, and twenty cups were drained.

"Now one with me," added Haberly; "and while Steele is filling your glasses, boys, I will sing you one verse of this year's campaign song—only one verse; your lives shall be spared." And without more ado he began:

"When the sneezers would seize on the knees of the Nation,
And tumble and humble the whole population,
When Democrats charge on our sure nomination—
Let heroes be found at the polls.
When rebels and copperheads, secesh and traitors
Are puffing themselves up with hot-air inflators,
We'll make them believe they are quite small potatoes—
Lord! watch the Republicans roll."

Haberly had risen, advanced, swept the crowd with his address, and on the last line expended a force that would have honored heroic measures. It won the crowd. They cheered again and again. They laughed uproarously, and called for more. The men at the pool tables joined the party, and clustered about Haberly with effusive homage. Captain Jim struggled against the waves that were rising above him. He crowded forward, and beat upon the bar in noisy applause. But he met Steele's discerning gaze, and read there the fear that John Haberly had spread in more than one campaign. He must dislodge this usurper.

"Boys," he shouted, and the words rose above the clamor, "drink this toast with me. 'Here's to'—"

"No, you don't," interrupted Haberly. "We haven't drank mine yet. I sang the song while Steele was fixing the liquor. Boys, drink deep."

He had won again, and he covered poor, crest-fallen Cowan with confusion by exclaiming, as he set down his glass:

"I'm for Ellet Grant for sheriff. Some of you are for Jim Cowan. Both are good men. Let the convention choose between them, and every last man of us will stand by the nominee. In the meantime, let me ask one cheer for Ellet Grant, the honest farmer, and the young men's candidate!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!" they all roared together.

Cowan joined in the shout with the best possible grace, and puzzled his maudlin brain for a way to capture the mastery. It was no use. Sautern's defiance and his own inclination had led Haberly to a length he would not otherwise have attempted. He was no trifler in politics, and now that he was committed, Cowan saw a very wall of adamant against which he must dash himself. Besides, in this crowd was a number of men who easily remembered that Haberly was a good employer in campaigns, and they had no special bonds of union to hold them to the Captain. Their principal doctrine was: "Small profits from one candidate, and quick returns to another."

"Boys," pursued the manager, as the cheer subsided, and before any one could deprive him of the floor, "boys, did I ever forget my friends?"

"You never did," shouted a dozen voices.

"Then let me say no man ever had better friends than you have been to me—the whitest lot of fellows that ever wore hair." He bowed with a wide, comprehending gesture, lifted his hat to them as gracefully as though they had been ladies, and left the place.

"I'll just try the gang at Ringer's again," he said. He went in, strolled through the room, and heard the general talk. There was something of

weather, something of current gossip, a little of business, and a great deal of politics.

For in Indiana the male adult population is reckoned in voters—not in men. Presidential terms are olympiads, conventions are amphitheatres, candidates are gladiators, and tickets are weapons. The perfection of rage is reserved for those occasions when opposing parties meet. No link is strong enough to bind together friends who worship at opposing shrines. No crime is so dark that party fealty may not atone, and no life so white that party treachery cannot steep it in slime beyond the cleansing power of life or death.

Haberly saw two or three of the molders of opinion. They had pledged themselves to no man, but were willing to do what was for the best. They were strongly inclined, however, to indorse Cowan and his candidacy. Haberly's keen eye saw that, under the cloak of impartiality, they all had their instructions. He drew one of the most faithful aside, and gave him a modest bill.

"Buy something for the boys," he said. "During the evening you will hear lots about Cowan for sheriff. You get the fellows to figuring more on clerk. See who says a good word for Ellet Grant, and tell me to-morrow. You will lose nothing."

Then he bought a handful of cigars, divided them with his confidant, and went out. Sautern stood in his door as Haberly came up to untie his team. He was milder than when they last met.

"Still going to struggle, John?" he asked.

"I'm after you, Saut. I am, for a fact." But the tone was less belligerent, was more hearty and full of good fellowship. The boss concluded a truce had followed close upon the heels of a war declaration.

Haberly drove down street, past Sautern's house, where the ladies were enjoying the late evening air. He managed to speak to his horses, so the women would know it was he. He went out of their sight in the direction of his home; but when right at his stable door, he reached for the whip, touched his trotters, and sped out of town as if fate hung on his expedition.

Three miles from town a belated sewing machine agent, returning from a long drive, met him. His hat was turned down, his collar was turned up, his ready whip was hovering over his horses, and keeping them to diligent speed. At midnight he reached Wesley Grant's farm. The watch dog declined to admit him to the yard, but consented to announce his arrival. For five minutes the violent barking of the dog was all the response he had elicited. But he was per-

sistent, and at length the front door opened, and Ellet Grant appeared.

"Who's there?" asked the young farmer from the threshold.

"Come here, Ellet," said Haberly.

"Oh, is it you? What's up? Wait a minute." He withdrew, and shortly came out more fully clothed.

"Ellet," said the manager, "we must put up some money with the gang, or you are beaten."

"Great guns! John, I can't do that. I don't like that crowd, and I will not humor them. I do not believe they are the people."

"Look here. I went into Sautern's to-night, and when I mentioned your name, they scored you. Sautern himself vows he will oppose you before the nomination, and knife you afterward. Cowan and his gang had taken Steele's, and at Ringer's it was the same. They have spread the idea that you are too lofty. Cowan has laid down \$100. That does a great deal of good. If I am authorized to do the same for you, I can help you. If not, I tell you, honest, you are gone."

Ellet struggled with the temptation. He did not want to be defeated. He was sure if they did not use corruption against him he was easily the party's choice. But here they were depriving him of his rights, and his very conscientiousness

was the thing that most weakened him. His friends and relatives in Franklin, in Monroe, in Liberty and in Star, had pledged him their support. He would go into town with a good majority of the delegates. But Cowan men would be all over the county to-morrow, working for hire, and making their arguments in cash. Should he allow the beggarly minority of votes that boaster would win in the country to be added to the purchased influence in town, and so defeat himself? Had he not a right to checkmate such brazen infamy? If Cowan's only hope were based on this swill-fed floating vote, was it wrong for him to smite that very vote with a blow just hard enough to eliminate it? The evils offset, would not matters be in natural state, and would he not then win fairly?

"Think fast, Ellet," said Haberly. "I must be in Fayette by 8 o'clock in the morning, and the horses must have a little sleep."

Ellet said never a word. He drew a wallet from his pocket, counted out a hundred dollars, handed them to Haberly, turned around and walked into the house—the most humiliated man in Indiana.

The manager took the funds. "That's right," he said. "Good-night, Ellet," and he turned the trotters toward home. Right at the edge of town

he stopped at Turner's house and knocked at the door. Turner lifted a window, and Haberly saw a gleam of light along the barrel of a gun. Here was a man who took no chances on visitors who called at 3 o'clock in the morning.

"Hello, John," he said quietly, putting the rifle away. "What do you want?"

Haberly stepped down on the sod, and the two men put their faces together, one inside and just from his couch, the other without and just from a twenty mile drive. The latter laid a \$10 bill on the window ledge, and the former picked it up and folded it into his palm, not having any pocket in which it could be hidden.

"Sautern is going to have that up-town gang chosen to-day as delegates to the county convention. He will have you read the names in a mass, and whatever you read will go through like a bullet in butter. Now, I want you to go to Saut in the morning before 9 o'clock, and tell him I want three of that same gang chosen. You tell him it looks suspicious; you are afraid I have fixed them. Then you get him to put Forden, Himes, Bill Brown and Gurnsey on the list. He will do it if he thinks I want the other fellows, for he thinks Forden and Brown are all right, any way. Then you go ahead just as he wants you

to after that, and elect your list of delegates. Do you understand?"

"I guess so," said Turner. "You want Grant men, don't you?"

"That's it."

"I saw you talking to Gurnsey last night in at Ringer's. He seemed to be for Ellet after you went out, and that's what made me think so."

"Well, good-night, Turner."

"Good-night, John."

And the window slid slowly down on one of the faithful.

CHAPTER IX.

THE COUNTY CONVENTION.

Affairs in town assumed a different aspect. The gang at Steele's was undoubtedly a Grant gang. Ringer's guests were cold to Cowan, and even at Sautern's the boss was kept very busy to maintain the semblance of an unbroken line. Outside the saloons money did not do much good; but talking did. Dodd, the candidate for clerk, was an undoubted good man. He was better qualified and better liked than any man who had asked for that office. He lived in town. Now, should they jeopardize his chances by supporting Cowan, also from town? Would they not better favor Ellet Grant, and so win enough strength in the country to help them float in the rest of the ticket? The Democrats were going to name a strong man for county attorney; they were all decided on the matter. His opponent must necessarily come from town, as there were no lawyers in the country. Now, three candidates from town would be too much for the country voter, proverbially jealous on the question of geography in politics.

How could Haberly have touched all these springs? How could he manage to dispense with sleep for days and nights together? How could he be in Monroe township at sundown Saturday; at the county seat, twelve miles away, all the evening; at Jotham New's, fifteen miles distant, in time for church Sunday morning; in Liberty at dark, and then eat breakfast in Star, ten miles south? How could the very words into which he put his arguments reappear in every group of freemen, and prevail from morning till night?

On Monday, the day fixed for the county convention, Fairview was a very busy town. It was full of candidates, and delegates, and workers, and pullers, from dawn till long past midnight. They all had money, and they all spent it. A dollar was worth less that day than it ever would be again till election. No one was financially embarrassed. Depleted exchequers had been filled as if by fiat, and men who had owed meat bills for months smoked more costly cigars than the butcher could buy.

Yet merchants did not do much business. It was a man crowd—not a woman crowd; dry goods languished. It was a drinking crowd—not an eating crowd; groceries were a drug on the market. It was a talking crowd—not a working crowd; very little hardware was sold. But it took

three men to serve the patrons at Sautern's, and three at Ringer's, and three at Steele's—and all nine were wearier than the muses when Greece was greatest.

The court-room had been crowded for an hour. The chairman of the County Central Committee called the convention to order, and officers were elected. A few speeches had been made by the orators of the party. It was observed that old Wesley Grant was a delegate from Greene township. Sautern was not a delegate, but he sat behind Mr. Turner, who was. He sat where he could watch Charley, the worker, and Forden, and Himes, and Bill Brown, and Gurnsey. He chuckled when he thought how he had outwitted John Haberly.

"He was going to teach me a lesson," muttered the saloon keeper. "He would just about have done it, too, if Turner hadn't come to me Saturday morning, and had me knock off them fellers from the north end of town. I thought sure they was all right till Turner told me Haberly wanted them. I wonder how much he paid them. Well, he don't use them in this convention—in some other convention, mebbby."

Then he launched his first shaft.

"Mr. President," said Mr. Turner, rising to prove his loyalty to Sautern, "I move that the

delegates here assembled do now pledge themselves to support without exception, and to the best of their ability, every candidate who may be nominated here to-day."

He sat down, and two or three men seconded the motion in a perfunctory sort of way. There are a good many men who, in a meeting, would second a motion to decapitate each member of the assembly, beginning at once.

Old Wesley Grant got the eye of the chair, and rose to oppose the motion.

"Who ever heard of delegates pledging themselves?" he asked, smiling, for he knew his point was well taken. "Candidates sometimes pledge themselves. This convention will be the first ever heard of where the delegates did such a thing."

"We will start the fashion, then," retorted Turner. Any one would have said he retorted savagely.

The chairman proceeded to put the motion, but old Wesley opposed it for another reason.

"I am opposed, then, on general grounds, and should like an opportunity to tell why."

"Mr. President," shouted Mr. Turner, while a hub-hub was rising all over the room, "I object. No matter what may cause the gentleman's opposition. No matter what are his reasons. It will do no good to air our grievances here. Let the

majority rule, and let wisdom guide our councils."

"Mr. Grant has the floor," said the chairman, whose ideas of parliamentary rule were that this motion was open to debate.

"I oppose the motion, and want the delegates here to know the reason why."

"I object to knowing the reason why, Mr. Chairman," interposed Bill Brown, from another part of the house. "Let him agree to abide the will of the convention, or withdraw now."

The chair had a revelation from the direction of Sam Sautern.

"The chair sustains the objection. The motion has carried, and Mr. Grant must either abide the action of the party delegates, or withdraw and give way to some other man who will."

"Then I withdraw now," said the old man, sturdily. "I am not going to indorse in advance all the foolishness you may be guilty of here to-day."

Greene township called Mr. Grant's alternate into the vacancy, and the business of the convention proceeded. Wesley sat down outside the close reserved for delegates. Sautern turned upon him a look of triumph, which was met with the calm gaze of a man who could wait. Lawyer Poole got up and came over to the farmer. Himself a candidate for re-election to the office of prosecutor,

he believed all his hopes hinged on the nod and beck of Sautern. He had received his commands, and proceeded to obey them.

"You see we have got you down, Wesley," he said. "It won't do for anyone to cut Sautern and these fellows. He can beat Ellet for sheriff. This little incident ought to prove that to you. Do you want to see the boy beaten?"

"No."

"Then will you come down with a hundred, to be used by his friends?"

"I will not."

"He will be beaten."

"Let him."

Poole sat there a while longer, watching the convention, but wondering how this castle was to be reduced. Presently he put his lips near the old man's face, and said :

"Wesley, I want to see Ellet nominated." Spite of his thralldom to the ring, this was very true, as it increased his own chances, by reducing the number of candidates in town. "You ought to be willing to do something for your son. Everybody does it. Don't see the boy slaughtered here to-day. It will ruin him."

"I will not give one dollar for corruption."

"Will you lend Steele a hundred to-day? He needs it, and he is good."

"Oh, no, Poole. That is the same thing. I won't do it."

"Will you go on Ringer's license bond? His year is about up, and a little service like that will not hurt you any, and it will make both you and Ellet lots of friends."

The old man waited a moment, and then said "No," with great decision. Clearly, he had not weakened. Poole returned to his seat on the farther side of the house. Charley, the worker, the organizer of campaign clubs, glided through the crowd from his seat near Ellet Grant, and put his frowsy head between Sautern and Turner. After a moment he stood up straight, as one who had saved his country. Then he moved over to Wesley Grant. It seemed that a message had come to father from son through a very devious channel. The sturdy old farmer sat quite still while Charley poured a flood of argument, stained with unsavory odors, before him. But he declined to soften, even to the persuasive eloquence of the hustler.

Sims, the committee man, was on his feet. He moved that they proceed with the nominations in the following order: Sheriff, clerk, prosecutor, and recorder. Bill Brown seconded the motion, but one of the Dodd delegates opposed it.

“I am in favor of following the order observed in the committee’s call for a convention—clerk, sheriff, prosecutor and recorder.” And the majority seemed to be with him. Their success meant the nomination of Dodd for clerk. He being from town would lessen Cowan’s chances, for some of the nominees must come from the country. Sautern could not use Poole in this matter, for Poole was in favor of the movement. The chairman had risen, and was stating the motion. Sautern caught Charley’s eye, and shook his head vigorously. The organizer understood, and was on his feet in a moment.

“Mr. Chairman, and gentlemen,” he said, with great vigor, and with that assumption of virtue surprised which always attracts attention. “The motion is to adopt the order suggested by our honorable committeeman, and a good many gentlemen seem inclined to oppose it, and to favor the order adopted in the call. I am inclined to be guided in this matter by the will and the judgment of the honorable gentlemen who are charged with the duty of managing the party’s affairs, and if the honorable gentlemen representing the political conduct of the campaign in this matter think it is better for any reason to pursue a certain order, I am the last man in the county to oppose them. But we must not do things here as

they do in the South. What we want here is harmony—harmony in the convention, harmony on the street, and harmony at the polls. To secure harmony we must be guided in a certain degree by the wisdom of the honorable gentlemen who give their time and attention to the conduct of our political affairs. This is not Mississippi, nor yet Florida, and we must in a certain measure be guided by the counsels of the honorable gentlemen—”

And so on for the four or five minutes required to notify the whippers-in from the various townships that the motion must be carried. An uncommon rustling around had been indulged, but the chairman presently received permission to proceed.

Other delegates broke from restraint, and opposed the motion. It was with difficulty the debate could be stopped. The men did not take kindly to gagging. Somehow, Sautern felt a breeze of mutiny in the room. To his astonishment, the motion was undoubtedly lost, in the *viva voce* vote.

“I demand a rising vote,” shouted Charley, who knew the advantage of that method. Many a delegate was willing to sit still and shout “No” when ordered to shout “Aye,” and yet object seriously to standing up and letting Sautern’s eye

range over the room, marking culprits for future punishment. The boss nodded his head in approval at the worker.

"All in favor of the motion will rise to their feet," said the chairman, and every man the machine could summon stood up in an instant, visibly lifting up his neighbors.

"All opposed," said the chairman, when the affirmative vote was counted. The motion was lost.

"I move," said the Dodd delegate, before Sautern's men could rally, "that we proceed to the nomination in the order published in the committee's call—clerk, sheriff, prosecutor and recorder."

A score of seconds showed the tide was flowing now, and in the least possible time a favorable vote was recorded. Cowan was intensely angry, but he still hoped he might throw his strength to Baker, an out-of-town candidate for clerk, and so defeat Dodd. Sautern's emissaries were busy.

"We'll help nominate Baker for clerk, if you will help nominate Cowan for sheriff," they said, and in the confusion which preceded the taking of a vote it seemed the trade was arranged. But surely the convention was tired of dictation. It was slipping out of the hands that had so often guided it. While the delegates were willing to

be bound by the general action, they themselves wanted to say what that action should be. They did not approve the rude manner in which sturdy, honest old Wesley Grant had been expelled. It was enough for some of them to know that the same influence that had ousted him now demanded Dodd's extinction; and they were minded to oppose it.

The feeling for Baker did not amount to a preference, and so when the first ballot had been counted it was found that Dodd had more votes than any other one man, though not enough to nominate him. The third aspirant was dropped, and a new ballot was prepared. Again the effort to nominate Baker was made, but it failed, for the result showed Dodd the choice of the convention by a good majority.

The machine had sustained a defeat. Sautern could not understand it. What was the matter with those delegates? Who was controlling them? Had John Haberly made good his threat to teach him a lesson? Was this the lesson he intended teaching? Why, the man was not even in the room.

The struggle for sheriff followed, and was spirited, indeed. When Ellet Grant was placed in nomination there was no mistaking the enthusiasm. He was an undoubted favorite. Captain

James Cowan, the Honorable James Cowan, Jim Cowan, the people's friend, and plain Mr. Cowan were some of the designations applied to the second nominee. Two others followed, but on the second ballot one was dropped; while Grant led Cowan by five votes. Where would the last man's strength go? If to Cowan, then Grant would be beaten. If to Grant, then Cowan was done for. The machine revolved with amazing swiftness, but encountered again that chilling resistance. Even the delegates who owed allegiance to Ringer and Steele declined to be directed.

And on the third ballot, Ellet had a clear majority over all. The cheers that greeted him were gall and wormwood to the fat man who sat behind impassive Mr. Turner. He stole one glance at old Wesley Grant, and saw a face calm and unmoved in the general rejoicing. He fairly raved to think how, as a matter of course, that old man took triumph. He could stay to see no more. It was positively maddening. Let them run their convention. He would show them yet. And he snatched his hat and bolted from the court-house—blind, deaf and dumb with anger.

CHAPTER X.

A POPULAR CANDIDATE.

Reaching his saloon, Sautern first refreshed his spirits, and then poured out the vials of his wrath—at long range—on the victors. He would show them. Let no man of the whole outfit come into his place again, nor ever ask a favor. He half believed even Turner, and Bill Brown, and Gurnsey, and Forden, and Himes had been untrue to him.

“I am for Frank Logan for sheriff from here on,” he shouted. “If you Democrats want an office in Fairview, now is your time.”

But he had not yet reached the depths. When the convention adjourned, he learned that Poole had been defeated. He could have borne that, for Poole secretly favored Ellet Grant's nomination; but he was defeated by a temperance lawyer from Hamlet, the second town in the county—Ezra Fuller, fresh from college, fresh from home, fresh from all those influences which were Sautern's special abhorrence.

“I'll beat the whole ticket,” he vowed, as he paced the length of his rooms, and made all his

patrons uncomfortable. "And I'll do more. I know every man who stood up there and was counted agin Sims' motion to change the order of nominating. I'll lay for every man of them. They'll hear from me, and hear often."

Right in the midst of his passion the screen door opened, and John Haberly led Ellet Grant into the room. Haberly's whole bearing was that of a man who had never heard news, either good or bad; a man who had never hated, and had never loved; a man who had no interest on earth or elsewhere which could provoke either a smile or a sigh.

Ellet was less composed. He had fought a hard fight, and had won a good victory. Still, he was not unduly exultant. He was, indeed, rather nervous. He wanted to appear strong, yet indulgent; to tower a little above, yet stoop to some affiliation. And at the same time Ellet Grant both felt and acted out of place in a saloon.

"Well, Sautern," said Haberly, calmly, "we came in to congratulate you."

"You did?" with intense downward inflection.

"Yes. Let us have a cigar."

"Man there to wait on you." Was he to be softened by any twenty-five cent purchase?

"How do you like the ticket?" Before any reply could come Haberly continued: "This is

Ellet Grant, the nominee for sheriff. I don't think you two are acquainted, and you ought to be. Mr. Grant is a devilish good man." Then to Ellet: "Mr. Sautern is one of the wheel horses in the county, and a gentleman we all have found to be very agreeable."

Sautern did not at all enjoy the situation. He shook hands, but he did not want to. He acknowledged the introduction, but it would have been so much more to his liking to kick this precious pair clear through the transom, and across the street.

But while he stood before them, letting Haberly manage the conversation, Sautern concluded to accept this overture in a friendly spirit, and make it the first of many visits to his place. How richer than feasts for hungry men would be the treading on Ellet Grant now! How sweeter than honey to the tongue would be each sigh he could wring from old Wesley! How rarer than victory might he not make this defeat! So he unbent a little, jested as a beaten man may, hoped Ellet would treasure up no resentment, and, in the rising tide of fellowship, led them to the bar.

"Jap, wait on the gentlemen," he said to his chief assistant; and Jap, with linen a little stained, and face a little flushed by the work of the day, posed as a model of respectful attention.

He knew what this meant. He had tended bar since he was fifteen, and knew more about whisky than the men who made it, because he saw more of its operation. Jap had a theory that men and whisky were both good enough when in separate packages. "It's when they mix that trouble comes," he would say. He divided all bar-invoking politicians into three classes: "When they first get here, they own Sautern; when half way through the term, it's a stand-off; when they go out of office, Sautern owns them."

Yet it was not for him to warn this man. It was not for him to say that a street paved with dynamite were safer than this broad road. So he rested his hands on the bar, bent his keen eyes and intelligent face toward them, caught Ellet's diffident, muttered, protesting, "Whisky, please;" read John Haberly's order for "the same" in a familiar nod, and then served them with the grace and deference of a courtier.

Down the bar was a crowd of drinkers. Most of them were commodities yesterday; all were gratuities now. For months their only value would be that of possible future use. Yet they must be preserved from any chance of defection. They flocked around Ellet Grant, and showered congratulations upon him. He was always their choice, and if it hadn't been for them, he might

have been beaten. He was the whitest man that ever lived. That old Jim Cowan—who wanted him?

Ellet treated the last man of them, and then, growing in dignity as the liquor rose to his brain, patronized Sautern a little; praised John Haberly; assured them that he was all right—every day in the week, and then—treated again, drinking with them.

“Well, Saut, we must go,” said Haberly.

“We must go, gentlemen,” said Grant. “I am glad to meet my friends, and you are all my friends, and I am a friend to all of you. I’m all right every day in the week—every day in the week. Good-bye, Mr. Sautern. I’m glad to have met you. I’ll see you again.”

Haberly saw how it was going.

“We must call on Ringer and Steele, Ellet,” he said. “The boys there will want you to come. Between you and me, Ringer and Steele helped you to the nomination. They coppered every move Sautern made. Let’s take a little walk before we go in.”

It would not do for this man, whose tongue was already loose, whose wit was already light with intoxicants, to go straight to other potations. So they went to the mill, and shrewd Haberly bought some flour and horse feed. Then they

came back up town, prolonging the triumphal progress as far as possible, till Ringer's place was reached.

The candidate was introduced to Ringer and his bartenders, and to the men who lined the drinking trough.

"You're a lucky man, Mr. Grant," said the unpolished Mr. Ringer.

"So are we lucky men—to get so good a candidate," rejoined Haberly.

"That's so; that's so," assented the proprietor. "Best ticket ever was named in Fairview County. Nobody couldn't beat it. You've got plain sailing, Mr. Grant."

"With the continued favor of my friends, I think I have," said Ellet, whereat John Haberly's eyes glistened. It was a graceful, a politic thing to say.

"Gentlemen," resumed Ellet, "what'll you have? Give me some of the same—I mean a little whisky. Some men don't know his friends when they see him—I mean some people are down on me because I am down on you—I mean some people are down on me. But I'm all right every day in the week—every day in the week." This with great impressiveness. He wished them to understand he was entirely friendly, no matter what other persons had said about him.

They all drank. They didn't know what a fine fellow Ellet Grant was. His good clothes, his better bearing, his known wealth—all these made him a friend to cultivate. Add, then, his newly discovered convivial character, and he was a thing to awake enthusiasm. "The boys" were for him.

Haberly managed to escape from Ringer's with only one drink, and then he proposed another walk, this time to the foundry, at the farther end of town. He went in and made a pretense of transacting some business, leaving his protege at the door. Ellet stood there, steadying himself against the bench, and trying to read the scrawled records on the wall.

"First snow, Nov. 1, 1878.

"First snow, Oct. 24, 1879.

"First snow, Oct. 2, 1880."

Evidently the world was getting colder.

Presently Haberly led him away, and they stopped at Steele's. When they emerged Ellet needed a bridle on his lips as he had never before needed one.

But "the boys" were all solid. That was the one desideratum.

At sundown he climbed into the buggy beside his father, and drove home. At the very start he noticed, thick as were his senses, that Wesley Grant was silent.

“Meanest thing I ever saw, father,” he said; “putting you out of the convention. But it didn’t do ’em any good. We beat ’em. We beat the whole outfit; and we can do it again, any day in the week—any day in the week. They were down on you because you beat Beal two years ago. But they didn’t dare say a word against you in my hearing. No, not a man of ’em didn’t. I’d have choked the first one that dared say a word. I’d stand by my father every day in the week.”

Why, what load is that on Wesley Grant’s old heart? What fury is it that looms before, and throws a shadow over him? What fate is this that whets a knife in his hearing? How keener his agony as he reaches home; how he shuns their eyes that watch his coming from the porch; how with unused cunning he turns his son into the barn!

“Ellet, let’s wash before we go to the house,” he says. “Your face looks as if you had been threshing, and mine feels as if I had been threshed.”

He pumps a great pail of water, and Ellet, saner now for the long ride, plunges in his hands, and laves his face, his neck, his head, with the grateful liquid; then puts his hand across the spout, and drinks a huge draught. He rises refreshed, and dries his hands on the linen lap-robe. He notes with pain his father has not washed.

"He didn't need it," muses the young man.

"Cattle all fed?" asks the farmer of his man. "Better keep the horses up to-night; it looks like rain. Ellet, you run the buggy in the shed, and help Jim off with the wagon box. He will want to haul rails from the middle fence to-morrow, if the weather lets him."

And so, with commonplace commands and well-used habit he smooths the way to the family. But when his wife first meets him, her eyes are full—are blazing—with one question. He cannot answer it, yet in that inability her sinking heart reads all the truth.

What is it to father and mother that Ellet will be sheriff of Fairview County? Ellet has come home steeped in liquor. That would pall any glory.

The girls do not read the truth so darkly. To them, the victory is a victory. The misstep is quite apart from that. The facts do not need to dwell together. Esther is jubilant, and wants to know all about it. Yet she cannot understand when he tells her, and flies from details to general result. Ellet says good words for Haberly, and does not see that this is music to her ears. He would have lost only for Haberly. That man is a genius, a trump, a—a—a—words fail to dignify him. Esther vows another feast to the deity of

conventions, and Alice runs to the piano, and pours her pleasure over the yielding keys.

Ellet is weary. He has been up till midnight and later every day for weeks. He had ridden at all hours, and slept in all places. He will go to bed. So, after the lightest of suppers, he leaves them, and is instantly lost in the utter exhaustion that follows excess.

CHAPTER XI.

A SUNDAY AT THE FARM.

Pretty Lake Church was the pride of the neighborhood. At its sacred desk services had been held every Sunday afternoon for many years. The rich farms all around it produced the maximum of a wide range of crops; but the spirit of peace, order and sobriety was the rarest yield. This found its expression in a sort of fraternity that bound all the farmers together in bonds that only come with time and modest prosperity; in the courtesy that each one extended to the others, and in the gentle emulation which made comely appearance and decorous behavior the characteristics of Pretty Lake people. The preacher to whom they listened once a week lived on the shores of the lake, worked a little in his vineyard every day, and preached the truth undefiled, without either cursing Dives or canonizing Lazarus. A very modest theology was good enough for simple men, and beyond the staunch old tenets of entrance by faith and tenure by works, he seldom led his people.

His hands had once been supple and strong; they were weak and trembling now. His hair had once been as dark as night; it was white now. He had lifted the children of his flock to their christenings years ago; had spread his palms in blessing above them when they were married, and now rested content in the fellowship of those who had known him forty years, and loved him all the time.

Ellet Grant with his sisters had attended morning service in town these later years, but had never for one day deserted the homelier sanctuary by the lake. They were under no compulsion but that of love, and it was always strong enough to place them side by side with those who had known their lives, and to keep them there, honored, and honoring all with whom they mingled.

John Haberly drove out the Sunday afternoon following the convention. He was clad in the best of clothes, and was not unworthily proud of his team and carriage. One of his sisters accompanied him, and they two went home with Wesley Grant's family for dinner.

Oh, the farm-house meal of Sunday afternoon! What genius helps to make it? What pleasures for epicures are here! Who taught the aged hands of mother and the gentle hands of daugh-

ters to concoct its sweets? What fairy of the hours tossed it to completion so quickly? What gods of grace and beauty instructed its arrangement, and made that table fit banquet place for kings? Poultry grown plethoric in the abundance of waste, fried to a turn and crisping in crumbs; potatoes as smooth and as savory as ices; bread that rivals the pastry of towns; butter so sweet, cream so rich, milk so refreshing that gardens of Eden could not have excelled! Then the honey, fragrant with all the blossoming sweets of forest and field; the fruit that was gathered in season; the pies and the cake—those classics of a cook's senior year! And the brimming abundance of it all. Let no man think he has lived till he pass that flood-mark of life—the farm-house Sunday dinner

When sated feasters had drawn back, Ellet and John Haberly went with Wesley Grant to the broad porch, while the women gave that rare time just after dinner to social service. An hour later, the whole great house tidy from garret to cellar, they joined the men, talking and watching the shadows drift eastward.

“Did you ever take a Sunday evening walk in the woods?” asked Ellet of his friend. Haberly never had, and confessed a strong desire to do so.

“Will you go with us, father?” asked Esther, pinning on her hat.

"No, mother and I will take our walk later."

Down the broad lane, between the fields where busy nature was building for future harvests; through the woods where soil and stones had lain unturned for ages, not troubled by the hungry haste of man; past lady ferns, rank and beautiful; by sweet briars that filled the aisles of the forest with perfume; over a carpet of yielding moss and violets, to the edge of the wintergreen patch. Just over there, where the spongy ground forbade their footsteps, acres of whortleberries hung ripe in the hot air. Beyond them, hiding their rubies in the tangled vines, were store of cranberries, waiting the chill of winter, when they might sharpen thankfulness. Above the group of young people spread the branches of oak trees, lifting good broad leaves as the royal winds approached them, lowering in musical obeisance as the breeze passed by.

Esther and John Haberly were a little way from the others.

"Tell me about the convention," she said. "Ellet thinks you managed everything."

"There isn't much to tell. The chairman hammered on the desk at 10 o'clock, and read the call of the County Central Committee—"

"Oh, I don't mean that. One can read all that in the *Republican*. How did you get him

the nomination, when what you call the machine was against you? ”

“ Well, the machine isn’t supposed to be either for or against any one until after the convention. Then it is for the nominee, and against every one else.”

“ But Mr. Sautern said he would beat Ellet, didn’t he? ”

“ Not Mr. Sautern, Esther,” with emphasis on the title. “ Sautern—just plain, simple Sautern, the saloon keeper—did swear that he would oppose Ellet, and that no man could get the nomination who did not first see him and fix things up.”

“ Then how did you succeed? ”

“ I don’t think you want to know.”

“ But I do—very much. The man’s insolence was so unbearable.”

“ Well, to tell you the truth, I beat him with his own weapons. I know more people, and have more friends than he has. It took some money and some night riding, but the very men he depended on were the very ones I used.”

“ It took some money—how? ”

“ Well, there are lots of fellows who care only one thing for politics. If they can get enough to drink and smoke out of it, they are satisfied. They live in all communities, and they fairly flock in towns. They belong to all parties, and are

easiest controlled by the saloons. The candidate who has them solid can be nominated and even elected against any man."

"But you are not a saloon keeper, and Sautern, as you call him, is. How did you manage to use his own forces?"

"By getting the gangs of other saloons to oppose the gang in his saloon. Usually they all go together, but this time I got them divided. All the mischief that Sautern did was checkmated by the cussedness of some other fellow; so the whole fight was left, finally, for decent men to settle. More decent men supported Ellet than any other candidate, and so he was chosen."

"Divide and conquer," mused Esther. But she was not thinking of that. She was trying to reconcile herself to what seemed very wrong. A moment later she said: "But it took money, and a use of the saloons."

"Only to the extent I say. I let one saloon counteract another saloon, and then the people settled the matter as they wanted it. If I had not done so, Sautern would have beaten a good man simply because he was good."

She pondered that awhile, and then she said: "I am glad you did it. I am very glad you did it."

"So am I," was the response, and in the three words was bound up no little of self gratulation.

She saw this, recognized his claim upon her, and tried to thank him in words—but words were so empty. He looked in her eyes, bright with her praises, and found more payment than volumes could have held.

They all strolled back to the house, the girls with trailing grasses and scimeter blades of giant ferns; with a wealth of wood flowers, and the scent of unturned earth upon them. The sun was low, and Wesley Grant and his wife were completing their weekly tour. The young people gained the house first, and filled the listening rooms with happy music. An hour passed, and the cord that tethered Esther's heart to Haberly was strengthened. His chief distinction in the county had been won by methods decidedly shady, yet one forgot all the bad one heard of him when he stood so easily before the world, and asked no favors. His presence was marked by a certain polish, his bearing was always calm and collected, and his simplest actions were so plainly those of a man who never struggled, yet always won.

He was a hero to her; and yet, in confessing that, she hushed a conscience-uttered protest, and hurried the rising tide of feeling that rolled about his image in her memory. She must be kind to him. Had he not helped her brother?

CHAPTER XII.

THE RALLY.

The weeks that followed were full enough of work at the farm, and politics was allowed to drift without special guidance until in August, when Ellet took the side-bar buggy, and started on his tour about the county. National, State and local issues were to be decided. Meetings were held almost nightly in some of the townships, and at many of these Ellet was present. He was no speaker, but his simple directness when called upon to address the voters had a good effect.

"They think you are a sort of ideal candidate," John Haberly had said.

"I hope at the end of my service they will say I have been an ideal sheriff," responded the young man, and Haberly, who was much in demand at meetings, repeated the sentiment when he came to extol his friend. It was a good thing to say.

The Republicans had a grand rally in Fairview at the end of August, and all the candidates regarded it as sunshine in which they were wise to make hay. Great, flaring posters stood dis-

played at every point of vantage in the county. The *Republican* had filled its columns for weeks with laudatory lines for the principal speakers. A great booth had been erected in the court-house square, and a wide space in front was occupied with rough seats, in the shade of those trees which were the chief glory of the county town.

The candidate for governor was himself to address the people, and in the earliest morning hours the place took on the airs of preparation. Flags were flying; bunting fluttered from the awnings; lithograph portraits of the leaders were on view. The streets were clean. Boxes and barrels were arranged in order; merchandise was dusted and heaped ready to hand; men wore better clothes than on common days.

At 9 o'clock the "grand marshal" rode down the street, at the head of a number of aides; each wore a sash about his waist, and a cockade in his hat. All were emulous of military grandeur, though none appeared majestic. The delegation from Fayette township was first to arrive, and the commandant sent an order to halt it at the edge of town until others should come. By 10 o'clock all were ready, and then the grand parade began.

The cornet band marched bravely down the street, blatant with martial airs. Behind it came

the county magnates, with the "Governor" in a carriage. For in Indiana a candidate for gubernatorial honors is dignified with his coveted title long before election. It would be treason, disloyalty, an expression of doubt, to do otherwise. Distinguished guests from neighboring towns occupied other carriages, and then came the masterpiece of the day. A mammoth Ship of State had been launched on the waves of partisan enthusiasm, and rigged with partisan mottoes. It was guided by a Jehu who would have disdained recognition from his fellows of yesterday unless they subscribed to his partisan views; and from stem to stern the craft was guiltless of any workmanship save that of partisans.

But it was not its hull or rigging, its spars or its motive power which glorified the Ship of State. The passengers who crowded its deck made its chief adornment. Thirty-eight girls, each typifying a State in the Union, and all crowned with tinsel and gold, waved partisan fans, shaded themselves with partisan parasols, and all together sang partisan songs. The Ship of State was cheered to the echo.

Far down the street the long procession unrolled from the rendezvous, and trailed past the public reviewing stand, where the Governor, whose carriage had been driven from the line,

stood in the throng of notables, and gazed with great admiration on the assembled proof of fealty. Then the men who had counted fell to disputing as to the number of vehicles, and the length of time occupied by the procession in passing a given point.

After dinner the crowds gathered again at the court-house, the Ship of State was anchored in the shade, and the Governor was introduced to a host of admirers. He was a good speaker, loud with the frailties of his enemies, and sounding with the virtues of his friends. He was apt at illustration, humorous, strong to denounce, powerful to plead. And when he had closed with a peroration that attuned his hearers to serenity in partisan faith, the crowds dispersed and flooded the town with activity.

Sidewalks were thronged, stores were occupied, salesmen were struggling to attend all comers. Alleys, back streets and vacant lots were full of teams; and everywhere ranged with tireless energy the drink-enthused advocates of the latest speaker. By sufferance the day was theirs, as a week later it would be their mortal enemies'. They shouted, talked in roars, sang bits of songs, smote comrades with crushing friendship, handled cigars in a clumsy fashion, and then—drank again.

Decorated dwellings showed the politics of households. About the residences most elaborately, most gorgeously adorned, were all the evidences of many guests. Parlors were thrown open in unused splendor; lawns and porticoes were gay with chairs that seldom saw the sun; there was a strange air of activity about the kitchen, and feasts were preparing to befit the day. John Haberly found food for his cynicism in all this. He wanted to see the folly from a spectator's standpoint. He took his team of trotters and the carriage, took Lawyer Poole and the Grant girls for a drive. He went slowly around the town, remarking the transient grandeur, commented on it in a way strange to the ladies, but not in a manner to surprise Lawyer Poole. They bowed to many and were gazed after by all. This was John Haberly, the manager of the campaign. Such a progress on such a day was treading very close on the confines of greatness.

Evening, twilight, darkness, midnight, followed each other, as the tides fell, and at daybreak Fairview rose dizzy and disliking to work. The town was gorged by the feast of yesterday. It would take days in returning to regular life. The litter would stain the greensward and bye-places for weeks, and so the rally would pass into history.

Ellet Grant was around town all day, but did not once touch liquor. He had spent money for his bibulous supporters, but had managed so gracefully to avoid drinking that no offense was felt. He was proud of his strength, and prouder of his tact. Surely he had nothing further to fear from this bane of politics. He had proved he could drink or let it alone, and the incident of convention time might never be repeated.

Frank Logan was making the race for sheriff an exceedingly interesting one. The Democrats had pinned their faith to him as in all respects a fitting opponent of Ellet Grant. He was particularly strong in the out townships, and in none more so than Franklin. The Republican nominee took a run down there, and spent the night with Dave Edwards and his boys. The four voters in the family were solid for Ellet, and gave rather bright reports of his standing in the township.

"But I learn Frank Logan has a strong pull down here, and I am afraid he will change some of your friends before election," said Ellet.

"Now don't balk before you come to the hill," said philosophical old David. "We will take care of Franklin, and it won't cost you no money, neither. Everybody won't vote for you, but you'll get a bigger majority than any man on the ticket. Folks down here recollects that you always

attended their spelling schools and things, even before you was a candidate."

Ellet complimented the supper. He sat with the boys, and told them some stories he had lately learned. They laughed immoderately, and waited for more. He ranked above them; both he and they saw that. He was stirred to talk well. They respected him for his quick wit, his evident equality with the "big bugs in town," his kindly manners, that could surely grow in no meaner field than a man's true heart. He drew them after him to a talk with Uncle David, on affairs by no means touching elections. He paid gentle deference to the farmer's wife, and retired at last with the assurance that the whole family would make his cause their own.

He visited a dozen places in the township the next day, wearing an air of easy confidence, yet binding the voters to him in an obligation which was not less effective because unexpressed in words. He prolonged the tour, and saw the faithful over in Liberty, and Monroe, and Star. He reached home Saturday night, and found an encouraging message from Haberly.

CHAPTER XIII.

SAUTERN DEFENDANT.

Court was in session, and Sautern was defendant in a civil suit for damages. He had sold liquor to Matt Tolliver, a confirmed drunkard, notwithstanding the legal notification to desist. Matt was an old soldier, a former comrade of Poole, the prosecuting attorney, and was a pensioner of the government. One day, directly after drawing his quarterly allowance, Matt had "just dropped in at Sautern's" to invite congratulations and to express his boundless contempt for a charity so limited as to allow him but \$8 a month, when the government could well afford to give him \$20. He found the proprietor so much of his own mind that they pledged each other in a second bowl.

Charley, the worker, with a scent unerring, found him there, after the fourth potion had made him generous, and became at once his guardian.

"You better go home now, Matt," Sautern had said, "and put up your money."

But Matt wanted the proprietor to keep the roll; he wanted Charley to count it and turn it

over to Jap Sweet, the bar-tender. He wanted to do as he pleased with his own. It *was* his own, and if he took it home his wife would confiscate it. She always did. Women were forever interfering.

Matt did not go home to dinner. He was not present there at supper. At 9 o'clock Mrs. Tolliver came for him. She was a tall, athletic woman, who had outlived beauty and forgotten grace. Adversity had made her suspicious, and wrongs had taught her persistent self-reliance.

She walked straight through the screen doors, and stood in the center of the room. Business suspended for a time, while the men who played pool and the others who lined the bar quit their pastime, and stared at her with bright anticipations of a scene. Her husband was not in the crowd.

"Where's Matt?" she demanded.

Sautern waved his hands at the four walls, silently parrying the question.

"Where's Matt?" she asked again, a little sharper than before, and addressing the proprietor directly.

"I don't know, Mrs. Tolliver. You can see he is not here."

"He has been here, and has been drinking—hasn't he, Jap?"

But Jap was deaf to her, and scrubbed the bar in a discouraging manner.

"You have sold him liquor agin my order. Now, I want to know where he is, and I'm goin' to know."

She started through the crowd, but Sautern stood between her and the back room.

"Now go away, Mrs. Tolliver, and don't make a fuss. I tell you Matt isn't here. He was here this forenoon, and took a drink with some man—I don't know who; but Matt didn't buy it; the other man paid for it. Now, go on home, and don't make a fuss."

"Go home and leave him here to be robbed? Let me alone! Let go of me! Let go of me!"

She twisted out of his grasp, dodged past him, and threw her bony figure against the door. It opened, revealing four startled men around a small table. Matt had a hand full of cards. The others had hands full of ivory discs. She marched straight to her husband, helped him to rise, and then demanded:

"Where's your money?"

"I aint got no money, Susann. Lost it on four deuces. Luck dead agin me. There's no money; so go on home, Susann."

His comrades in the game had vanished.

“Where’s his money, Sautern? You give me back the \$24 he drawed to-day, or I’ll haul you up. You give—”

“Now you get out—both of you,” cried the proprietor. There are things no business man can stand, and a threat is one of them. “Get out!”

With much commotion, many vociferous cries, a deal of pushing and struggling, the two are ejected. A crowd gathers about the door. The boys hoot and follow the pair home. People hear about it all over town, and continue dropping in at the refectory to jest, and take one drink while they talk.

Mrs. Tolliver saw Attorney Poole the next day, and a suit for damages was begun. Before convention Sautern would have felt safe enough; Poole was under obligations to him. But since the prosecutor had been sacrificed there was no telling what the attorney might do. Yet to wait until after election, when that infamous temperance crank, Ezra Fuller, was made prosecutor, would be worse; for he would feel called upon to institute criminal proceedings as well. To win the case now seemed the one way out.

Sautern called in John Haberly.

“Can’t you see the sheriff, and get the right kind of men on the jury?”

“ I’ll try, but a sheriff just going out of office is a mighty unaccommodating beast, Saut,” said the manager. But he did the best he could.

Charley, the worker, had been subpœnaed by the prosecution—an unwilling witness. He was busy day and night with those whose testimony was most damaging. It was to his interest and to their interest to let the woman prove as little as possible. Sautern was not to blame. He advised Matt to go home before he had spent a dollar. If Tolliver insisted on sitting into a game of poker, that was his own fault; and if he lost his money, why—that was one of the things that often happened. Sautern was unjustly accused. It wasn’t right.

People talked about the affair all over the county. The *Republican* and the *Democrat* gave it extended notice, and finally public opinion seemed to decide that if Sautern was guilty the law was wrong. That relieved the defendant, and made Mrs. Tolliver’s claim for \$5,000 damages an unparalleled persecution.

But Poole was in earnest. He would not talk about the case on the street. He seemed to know when a man came to him from Sautern on the subject, or from any one else in Sautern’s interest, and he told all of them, and told them plainly, that he was after a verdict, and that he would

certainly get it. He could prove by a cloud of witnesses that Tolliver had bought drink after drink, and paid for them; that Sautern himself had at length gone behind the bar and waited on him; that the pensioner had taken the beggarly remnant of his money, and followed a party into the little back room, where they began playing, only to cease when destitution and Susann ended the game.

The prosecuting attorney knew all the witnesses, knew the methods that would be employed to keep them from testifying, and knew just how to prevent that action. He could afford to decline with emphasis all invitations to "go and see Sautern and fix the thing up." People generally were gratified, and began to look forward with surprised interest to the vigorous prosecution of a saloon-keeper. Public opinion, that mercury in the thermometer of history, had shifted again, and was now risen to the approval of rectitude.

Tolliver's was the fourth case on the civil docket. The third was closed early in the afternoon, and the judge called the next in order; but the attorney in a matter of smaller importance asked that the case of Tolliver versus Sautern be passed till the following day, while his more trivial contest be settled in the short remnant of the present session. He talked a moment with

the interested attorneys, and they gracefully gave way. They could do nothing of importance this evening, any way. And so the announcement went out that Susann Tolliver's big case would begin in the morning.

CHAPTER XIV.

POOLE WAKES TO MANHOOD.

Lawyer Poole sat alone in his office that night, smoking a very disreputable pipe and gazing off across the table, which was littered with books and papers. He had about made up his mind to cut loose from the old crowd, and prosecute vigorously every case on the docket. He was weary unto death with the domination of that gang at Sautern's. He stood head and shoulders above them in learning and wit; he knew that. And it brought him no little shame to reflect in the same moment that they had used him. He looked back eight years, and remembered his advent in Fairview. How he trembled then on the verge of attempt. How nervously he counted all the factors that could be employed, and how quickly he saw the strength of the saloon interest. With a natural bent for politics, he reflected to-night that he had devoted his abilities to a very poor cause, and sold his services for an exceedingly small consideration. He had hobnobbed with the worst of them right from the start. And here

when it paid them to throw him over, how quickly they had done it.

"Oh, well, I don't blame them," he said, as he bestirred himself to fill his pipe again. "I haven't earned decent treatment, and I haven't received it. That's plain enough—and it's fair enough, for that matter. Serves them right, though, that in trying to run that convention with a sort of moral shot-gun, they should get the prohibitionist named for prosecuting attorney. He'll make things warm next summer—if they don't buy him. And they didn't get a single man they wanted, excepting Dodd. Well, from here out—Come in, come in!"

This last was directed toward the door, where some one was clumsily knocking. It was Petcher, attorney for the defense in Sautern's case.

"Come in," said Poole, as the other hesitated on the threshold. "Don't you know any better than to knock at an office door? Sit down. What do you want?"

Petcher was accorded a kinder reception than he had expected. It would by no means have surprised him had Poole slammed the door in his face. Yet, unstrained as was the greeting—for the apparent rudeness was a part of their olden familiarity—the visiting lawyer saw this was not the Poole he had known for the past eight years. He caught a defiant ring in that steady tone

which boded no good to his mission. Still, at the worst, it was only a question of amount. An unpurchasable man was simply inconceivable.

“Poole, what are you going to do in the Toliver case?”

“Going to sock you for the maximum damages—that’s what.”

Petcher searched his vest for a cigar, and asked with unruffled air, “Isn’t that pretty rough, considering everything?”

“Well, considering what? You and I might as well talk plain, Petcher. We know each other and each other’s past. No use beating about the bush. What do you want?”

“Considering the services Sautern has rendered you. He has been pretty good to you, Poole. It isn’t hardly right for you to jump on him now just because some gin-soaked old pensioner got tight in his place. Let’s continue this case until next term. Maybe you can see the thing as you ought before that time.”

“And have Ezra Fuller begin a State prosecution? For God’s sake—are you less afraid of that prohibitionist than you are of me? Then we don’t postpone. Petcher, I have made up my mind to cut loose from the whole blasted gang. There is room in this town for a decent lawyer—besides yourself, of course; besides yourself. I

am going to enter in that class. If you came here for a postponement, you are left. I try this case like all the others—and I try them hard.”

“If you don’t think people down on the street can hear you plain enough, why don’t you call them up?” asked Petcher, irritated at the other’s lack of discretion. “Here, have a cigar.”

Poole did not touch the proffered roll.

“When you go out of office, you will drop like a collapsed balloon, Poole. Nothing kills a lawyer off like serving a term as prosecutor. Now you can starve along here without a salary, or you can take regular pay from Sautern and Steele and Ringer—just as you like. This prohibition fellow is going to shake up the dry bones in Fairview, and these men will have a lot of cases to defend. You continue this one, and I am authorized to offer you a thousand dollars a year to defend all their cases, and you can take as much other business as you can get. What do you say?”

With a perfect understanding of the lucrative returns for legal services in Indiana county seats, the writer is abundantly safe in saying that Mr. Petcher was the bearer of a very flattering offer.

“Why do you want to continue this case if you are afraid of my official successor?”

“Because you will defend the State cases so much more ably than I can,” said wily Mr.

Petcher, with a graceful inclination of the head.

"Petcher, you don't touch me. You ought to know me better. You fellows have some scheme. What it is I don't know, and I don't need to know. But you can make no headway here. Go back and tell Saut I am out for blood. I will make the ring think before this term of court is over that kingdom has come, and they are not ready."

But Mr. Petcher retained his seat undisturbed. After a time he continued:

"Now here. There's no use acting this way. I've seen prosecuting attorneys go out of office before, and they generally act as if it was a mortal offense to ask for their retirement. Don't be unreasonable. You've had your share. None of us gets all he wants. You can do better by acting sensibly than by this foolishness. Can't we arrange it for me to win this case of Sautern's? You know plenty of ways. You might—"

"I might throw it over. Yes, I know. But I won't do it. No use, Petcher; I mean it. You can't buy me. I am going on the dead square from this out. I am tired of the whole thing. There is better work in me than cleaning up Sautern's waste."

"I read a pretty thing in that line the other day," said Petcher, affably. "The Governor meets one of his principal workers on the square,

and says to him, 'Well, how's politics?' And the worker says, 'I don't know, haven't been down to the saloon this morning,'" and the lawyer laughed very heartily. He would like to penetrate this armor of Poole's with some sort of a weapon.

"That's just it," said the prosecutor, "and I'm ashamed of it. The idea of a free people surrendering their own government into hands like that. Why, we had better have a monarchy—far and away. I won't do it! I won't do it! I tell you there is villainy enough in the men who sent you here to sell your wife or my mother into slavery to-morrow."

"Oh, there is! Look here. If we cannot buy you, maybe we can pound a little reason into you. You come down from that high horse, Poole, or your own official record goes before the court. You hear me. If it's war you want you may get a stomach full."

Poole got up from the table, crossed his hands behind him and walked the length of the room, as if considering. Petcher let him go till the leaven should work. Presently the prosecutor said:

"You simply don't understand me. I can't blame you, for I have been wallowing in the same trough with this sour-mash gang for eight years. Of course, when I say I am through, they don't

believe it; but it's true. This town is dead as a door nail, and has been for twenty years. Yet there are six saloons in it. The men who own them control practical politics in the county. They name every officer, or buy him after better men name him. They govern the town. They fix the street grade. They locate bridges. They vote special tax, and direct how to spend it. They even dictate who shall be so fortunate as to gain a home in the poor-house. They run not only the whole municipal, but the social machinery, from top to bottom. No one dares to stand against them. When Elder Bishop preached the truth about them he was run out of town, and we all stood on the street corners and laughed. Not a church, or a lodge, or a store, or even a private family but it confesses some things must not be done because the saloons oppose; or will be done because the saloons want them. Now, I know the whole thing from bark to center, and I am out against it. Don't think I am fooling. From here forward, I fight the saloon. About my official record—it's public. Hunt up what you like, and use it as you want to. You will always find me here—next to the bank, up stairs and first door to the right, as the advertisement says. Now, don't waste any more time with me."

It was hardly professional courtesy, and Mr. Petcher rose in a great passion.

"I don't have to sit in your office, Mr. Poole," he said, hotly. "I have rooms of my own."

"Then go there," rejoined the prosecutor, recklessly.

And it was an actual fact that Poole had not for one moment, in all his talk, reflected that his oath of office, his bounden duty, required at his hands just the work he had resolved to do. It was like a newly-discovered virtue. Pique had begun what honor would finish; but the homely quality of fealty to a public trust was buried far too deep in a mass of baser habit to easily dawn on the conscience of a practical man.

Next day, to the surprise of every one, Petcher asked for a continuance in Sautern's case. Poole opposed it, and he threw into his opposition such vigor and earnestness that those on the inside concluded something was wrong. The clerk nodded to the sheriff, and the professional jurymen moistened their lips in expectancy.

But the judge had had no revelation; and so, as he believed Sautern was safer in Poole's hands than in those of that fiery young attorney who would surely be elected; and as he knew who was making judges in Fairview County, he ruled against the motion. Then every method known

to the practice was employed to secure a delay; but Poole was better armed than Petcher, and met every charge with a readiness that showed the gang the metal and the stature of the man they had lost.

At noon the work of securing a jury was begun, and one after another the old, tried and true patriots who had haunted every session of court for a dozen years, were rejected by Poole. Some question, gleaned from the abundance at hand, would pierce their harness, and down they would go. Adjournment saw only four peers selected. This was very curious. When similar cases had been brought previously the panel could be filled in half an hour. The talk on the streets of Fairview that night was that Poole was mad as hornets, and would really try and win that case against Sautern.

The sheriff couldn't locate Charley, the worker. His subpœna was returned "Not found." A ripple of glee told that the spirits of the defense were rising.

Next morning the case was called, and a jury was secured by noon. It seemed a particularly sensible body of men. Most of them were farmers, and all were reasonably free from the dominion of Sautern and his gang. One by one the witnesses were sworn, and one by one they showed in every

word and action that they were out of place in the prosecution. But the event of the day came just before adjournment, when Petcher's first witness, Alva Martin, a cooper, said he walked with Tolliver from the bank to Sautern's on the occasion of the pensioner's drawing and losing his allowance; that he bought and paid for the liquor that Tolliver drank; that he went into the poker game with him, and saw him give Mrs. Tolliver, when she broke in the door, more than the \$24 he had when he entered.

Petcher fairly beamed on the witness. He had strong bits of the evidence repeated now and then, and placed this substantial timber where it would do the most good in the framework of his defense.

"Take the witness," he said at last, in that tone which is the condensation of assurance.

"You know you are under oath, do you, Martin?" asked Poole, in a familiar, not a professional manner.

"Ya-as, of course."

Poole looked at him very straight for some seconds. It was not a dark frown, or anything frightful. It was simply the direct gaze of one man who knows a lie, at another who tells it.

"Know the penalty for perjury, Martin?" This rather kindly.

"I object!" shouted Petcher, and then he bristled with indignation for some moments. But Poole was not disturbed. He asked a number of the most irrelevant questions, and so consumed the session.

Right at the door he met Sautern face to face.

"Saut, you heard Martin's testimony, did you?"

"Yes."

"Well, you produce Charley, the worker, here in court by 10 o'clock to-morrow morning, or I will put you to the trouble of defending a charge of subornation of perjury."

"You don't know what you are talking about," gasped Sautern, livid with anger and fright. He was off his guard. Had it come to this? Was it possible he could be talked to in such a manner, and by an elected official? The day of miracles seemed come again. All Fairview joined in the stare of amazement. Poole's defiance of the powers that be was as public as the court-house steeple. No one could explain or minify that command, accusation, threat. News of the event traveled into the country with the home-going teams, and next day a larger crowd than ever gathered at the trial.

Charley was there. He gave his testimony with a great appearance of sincerity. It was not of a piece with the rest of the evidence. The gang

had learned wisdom somewhere, and the worker kept perilously close to the truth.

And then came the arguments. Some of the older residents remembered the day when Poole first came to town. They remembered his maiden speech at the convention in that presidential campaign, and they remembered how his warm words and strong style waked the echoes in their dry old hearts, and gained the youngster a place of honor in the county and the party.

Now they recalled that effort, and heard it eclipsed. They listened to a man who knew most thoroughly all the infamy of the defense; listened to him heap reproach upon it in terms of scalding truth; listened to him as he turned from thunderous denunciation to sarcasm as acute as it was severe. They heard him charge home guilt in the debauching of that helpless old veteran, and crime in the attempt to escape from its consequences. And they heard him close with the bravest, noblest, strongest demand for justice that ever the old walls of the room had echoed.

The jury was won, and the verdict was his first height on the way to a new life.

CHAPTER XV.

WHO EDITS THE NEWSPAPER?

It was the last Sunday but one before election. Things had improved a little in the past few days. Poole was announced as an independent candidate for prosecuting attorney, and this is how it came about. His conduct during the last term of court had proven him fearless, efficient and reliable. No one could understand it, but they could all see it. The Democratic candidate was not an especially strong nomination. Poole in his olden state was satisfactory enough to the opposition party, and Matthews was only named that the ticket might be full. But wise ones everywhere knew he would be traded in the interest of Frank Logan when it came to the polls.

There was already a very strong belief that Ezra Fuller had pledged himself to certain interests. A suspicion was awakened when Sautern was found to prefer him to Poole as a prosecutor. It was strengthened as the campaign progressed, and he was found to modify his temperance sentiments in the public speeches. And finally it was

confirmed when John Haberly assured the committee that Fuller's contribution to the campaign fund lay right between the offering of Sam Sautern and that of Richard Ringer.

"He's a fish," said the bolder ones, as they discussed Ezra. "He thought he was honest when he lived at Hamlet and made red-hot talks agin the saloon; and he thinks he's honest now when he goes about putting salve into all the old sores he ever made. He thinks he can 'control the monster,' and will prove that he is not afraid, by lying down with it in perfect peace of mind."

Ezra Fuller's conversion to "liberal" views was a source of much trouble to the faithful in the out townships, and they had taken occasion one night in a meeting at Hamlet, to put the case squarely before him and demand a pledge in keeping with his utterances prior to the nomination—utterances which won that nomination for him. And, in the presence of messengers who could blast him in every precinct of the county if he earned the hatred of the gang, Ezra declared himself. The gang was satisfied, but the honest old fellows—the fools who thought men meant what they said—were disappointed. Some of them were ready to throw him over. And when, at the close of Fuller's speech, a man from Fairview rose and advocated

the independent candidacy of Lawyer Poole, he found a score of friends on the instant.

Major Poole had long enjoyed the friendship of the *Republican*. Editor Thompson was willing, on very slight provocation, to lay down the journalistic dignity, and steep himself in such convivial pleasures as were affected by the elect—county officers, a few leading merchants, and a fast farmer or two. The two men had long been boon companions in these occasional meetings which took place in the large upper rooms of the “Mammoth building,” and even the vices known there cemented the regard they had for each other. The *Republican* was for Poole in the county convention, and when he was defeated, indulged a very questionable editorial comment on the ability of the nominee.

But party is party; and after some little reflection Mr. Thompson came out strong for Ezra Fuller, reserving the right to say such little kind things of the veteran as would do him good when the staff of official income should be laid down. No one objected to that; but when, as dog-days ended, and fateful November came in hailing distance, it was noticed the veteran always fared better than the recruit in the *Republican's* summing up of merit; and it was decided to call a halt. But Thompson was not an easy man to handle. He held such positively ruinous doctrines on the subject

of editorial rights, he had gone through such a vitrifying process in his twenty years' experience on the tripod, that volunteers to teach him his duty were not unduly plenteous.

On the second Saturday night in October, the Prohibitionists, always noisy between elections, were holding a mass meeting in the public square, and a good many of the old guard had been drawn to the spot, just to see how young Lawyer Fuller would trim his sails in these conflicting breezes. This used to be his crowd. Every one of these weazened old fellows, proud of lips untouched by alcohol, had hung on the young man's periods in more than one meeting, and had indorsed his candidacy with a strength which no one pretended to disregard.

They had been enthusiastically for him from the start; but little by little things had been occurring to make them question his sincerity, and this meeting seemed to have been planned for the single purpose of crowding him upon record.

Below the legislative nominees the Prohibitionists had no candidates to offer, but they were intensely interested in the prosecuting attorney. New laws would be made this winter, partly by the counsel of whisky men, and with a view of stemming the rising tide of prohibition; and these extremists were in a fever of impatience for a man

who could and would enforce all such legislation as came thus to them, fair spoil of war. A number of their leaders addressed the meeting, and repeated calls were made for Ezra Fuller. He was in the crowd, but well to the rear, and declined to respond for a time. When he could not well avoid it any longer, the young man made his way toward the stand, stopped in front of one of the great flaming torchlights which gave illumination to the grounds, and began a non-committal address.

It was just a collection of dull old saws, that could offend no one, be he Christian, Jew or Turk. But they did not suit the temper of the crowd. These may have been "a cranky lot of old fossils," as fresher young men with faultier faces sometimes called them; but they were in earnest—and they could vote.

"If elected will you prosecute the cases on the docket against Sautern?" some practical fellow shouted.

Fuller tried to dodge by simulating deafness, but it did no good.

"Will you?" "Will you?" came from every part of the ground. He must answer. He dared not answer "Yes," lest the whole force of the gang descend like an avalanche upon him. He could not stand there and say "No," so he weakly

stepped down, and said neither. But he might better have defied than ignored them.

Some hot-head got the ear of the crowd, and began a harangue, pleading for the nomination of a Prohibition candidate for prosecuting attorney.

"We can do nothing without one," he cried. "Our laws will be laughed at, our work will be wasted. And right here, right now, is the place and time to prove our strength in Fairview County. I'd rather see every man on the Democratic ticket elected to-morrow than vote for this man who was with us for the nomination, and against us for the election." And the sentiment was cheered to the echo.

Some one shouted "Major Poole!" The lawyer had witnessed the shameful retreat of his late successful rival, and was laughingly commenting on it to Thompson when he heard his name called. His eye met the bright, blazing look of inspiration on the face of the editor. Both were veterans in politics, but the chances presented right here rather staggered them.

"Think quick," said Thompson. "If they mean it, go in." Then he shouted aloud, "Major Poole!"

They meant it. Not a man in that crowd had forgotten the Tolliver trial. They had lain awake nights, glorying in his courage and his skill. They

had no chance to doubt his sincerity, and almost wished his conversion had come earlier. But they had been pinning their faith to Fuller then, and never till this instant, when the cowardice of the latter consumed in an instant all their fealty for him, did the Prohibitionists turn to Poole. In that revulsion all his ability, all his courage, his fight against and victory over the gang, came back to them like a blaze, illuminating the surer path. Retributive justice to Fuller, no less than their own plans, were furthered by the choice; and the shouting continued:

“Major Poole!” “Major Poole!”

He had decided. The prosecuting attorney paced slowly across the grass, and mounted the rude platform that had served as pulpit for all manner of political gospels that summer. He stepped to the front. The crowd pressed closer and hushed into attention. His right hand was thrust into his coat, his left was behind him in that old-fashioned attitude he fancied the great lawyers loved. His face was lifted, his eyes were bright, and all about the man was that unnamed air which presaged a message. No one introduced him, and no one needed to.

“Gentlemen,” he began; and then added, not as an afterthought, but as purposely set apart, “and ladies!” There was greeting in the first

word; there was a caress in the last. "I am not a Prohibitionist." Some smart person started to say, "We all know that," but the orator cut in with a strength which engulfed and a dignity which abashed the disturber—"but I keep my word." There was a perceptible sound of assent that rose to a modest applause. "I am as independent a man as any of you. I have discharged the duties of prosecuting attorney of Fairview County for four years, and my record is as open as the day. It is not for me, but the people, to approve or condemn it. My associates and friends in this city have ever been the men who gave me my office. But a short time ago a case arose in which an old soldier, injured in the defense of your home and mine, was robbed in the house of one of the politics makers, the opinion makers, the officer makers, of Fairview. The injured wife came to me to prosecute her suit for damages. When I was admitted to practice at the bar of Indiana—a bar which holds names bright in the diadem of justice—I swore to maintain such actions as seemed to me legal and just, to employ in that maintaining such means as are consistent with truth, and to never reject, for any reason personal to myself, the cause of the defenseless or the oppressed. That was my promise, and that was the pledge that was kept. Was it for me to

betray Matt Tolliver's case because a defendant could punish me? By no means. I am not so beholden to him or to you, or to any one on earth, as to perjure myself for hire. And I say to you now, that if I am in this office when your laws are made, I shall prosecute them with all the vigor and ability and persistence of which I am master, till the voice of the people—in Fairview County, at least—shall be the voice of God."

There was a very whirlwind of applause as the lawyer's right hand, withdrawn from his bosom, visibly lifted them toward the Author of right. An impetuous disciple of the new faith leaped to the stand, and in a tumult of "Ayes!" pledged the last Prohibition vote in Fairview County to Major Poole for prosecutor.

Thompson took the arm of his friend, and they walked away.

"It's your night, Poole. Things are coming your way. I can't go back on the ticket, but I'll say all any man on earth can say for you—and I hope you'll get the office again; I do, honest. It will serve them right."

"You go slow," said the generous Major. "Don't hurt yourself with the gang. Your friendship is very grateful, and I would be making a very poor return if I let you break with those

fellows, and lose by serving me. They can hurt you more than they can me."

But when the *Republican* come out next week there was a graphic account of the meeting, with the incidents that made it memorable; an editorial regret that Ezra Fuller had not measured up to the standard of his opportunities, and a more than kind word for Major Poole. There was much to be said for the man. He was true to his party, and had the courage to so declare himself in the very face of the crowd. He was really entitled to the office, and it would not be strange if he won it.

That was too much for an organ to say; but it was nothing to a column contribution signed "Veritas," which appeared on the very first page. Whoever the writer was, he knew the county. He dealt in facts as sharp as poniards, and as many-sided as crystals. He was unsparing of the gang, and named men, recited events, recorded dates, with a precision and persistence that added weight to the undoubted truth of every line. "Veritas" advocated the election of Major Poole for the good of the old party, for the vindication of the new, for the benefit of the public generally.

It was a bombshell in the camp of the faithful. The boys had not done carrying the last of the edition to the post-office when groups could be

seen all over town, listening to the strong words of the unknown writer. Who was "Veritas?" No matter. He was dangerous or delightful—depending on how you looked at the success of the ticket.

Just after noon John Haberly climbed the stairs to the *Republican* sanctum, accompanied by Sims, the county committeeman, and Sautern, the head and front of the offending. Thompson received them, gave them such chairs as his place afforded, and sat down to await the charge. No need to begin jesting, or attempt to deprecate the gathered wrath of that trio. The manager opened the fight.

"Thompson, who's 'Veritas'?"

It was blunt, but no more blunt than the answer.

"I will not tell you."

"What?" in angry surprise, from Sims and Sautern.

"I will not tell you," repeated the gaunt editor, calmly turning his eyes on the vendor of intoxicants. Evidently, Mr. Haberly must manage this thing carefully. Temper would do it no good.

"We think, Thompson, that was a very grave mistake of yours, printing such an article right here ten days before election. It will do the

ticket no end of harm. You know we all expect you to stand by the regular nominees from start to finish, and it is a real calamity to have such a thing occur. You get the tax-list and the county printing, and all the blanks, and whatever advertisements the sheriff or other officers have to give out, besides all those of the attorneys on our side, and it is no more than fair for you to support our ticket when we make it, even if all your friends are not on it. We went to a heap of trouble, and just as we have got Ezra Fuller fixed so he isn't dangerous, here you come along with your old 'Veritas,' and spoil the whole arrangement."

"I am supporting your ticket," said Thompson, not overlooking the latter and more important admission. "Veritas" might need it. "The paper has a dozen paragraphs and items, urging the voters to do their duty by depositing a clean ballot from top to bottom; telling them the strong points in our men and our measures, and the weak points in the enemy. Have you read them?"

"Yes, but then you spoil it all when you say what you do about Poole, and this 'Veritas,' whoever he is, makes an awful mess. That will cost us scores of votes. It will beat Fuller, and most likely carry down other candidates. You'll see next Monday the Democrats will pull down their candidate for prosecutor, and trade high and low

for clerk and sheriff. You can't do that sort of thing here. The boys won't stand it. It's an awful blunder. And we must know who wrote that article. That's the first thing."

"And then what?" asked Thompson, with provoking coolness.

"Then you must get out extras from now till election, and try to undo the damage."

"How?"

"Attack Poole. We can give you plenty of ammunition. He has done lots of crooked things. Lay this week's issue on one of the boys, and discharge him till after election—or something. And then whoop it up for the ticket till the polls close."

But all this was not enough for Sautern. He was mad from center to circumference, and could scarcely restrain his anger from breaking out in harsh, profane tirades against this fool editor, who had told the truth.

"Naw, that ain't half, John," he said, impatiently. "This is the blackest treachery ever I seen. Take back every word you said, and then give up the name of the man who wrote this—"

"Gentlemen," said the editor, "we may as well end this delightful conversation. You are not running this paper, and I am. Leastwise, I think I am. At any rate I pay the bills, do the work

and attend to the business, and I am going to set up my type to say just what things I please. I don't please to take back a word, because every word was as true as gospel. And as for telling who 'Veritas' is, I won't do it."

"Why, you must, Thompson," said Sims. "Isn't this a public paper?"

"It's a public paper from a private office. It's public when it's published. Up here I'm boss. You have no more right to come in and dictate how to run this place than I have to take charge of Sautern's saloon or your hardware store. What you do there is your own business; its effect on the public is public business. The former I cannot interfere with; the latter any one may criticise. So with the *Republican*. It's yours only when it's delivered to the people. From that time forward you may do as you like with the copy you get. Before that you have no right to interfere—and you won't interfere much with me, neither."

"I demand the name of the writer of that 'Veritas' article," shouted Sautern, rising angrily.

"Demand and be hanged. I won't tell you. It's none of your business. If you are aggrieved, go get your Ezra Fuller to sue me for libel. I can then take all the responsibility on my own shoulders, or make the author answer for his share

of the crime, just as I like. But I don't want any of you people to overlook the fact that I am running this paper, and your only remedy—if you don't like it—is to pay up and quit. This thing of making the whole town bound in the management and free in the expense won't work in the *Republican*."

And that was as near satisfaction as they could come.

CHAPTER XVI.

ELECTION.

So here was the strange condition of the gang pulling for prohibition Ezra Fuller against corrupt old Poole, as they had come to call him. Every hour the truth became plainer. The incumbent was more dangerous to them than was the novitiate. Anti-saloon men everywhere were warned by that, and they trusted the older man. Some of them swore they would trade Dodd votes for him, even if it elected a Democratic clerk and sheriff too.

Poor John Haberly's hands were very full. It took a heap of money, he said, and an almighty sight of night riding. True, Ellet Grant was tolerably safe, but then even Ellet could not afford to refuse his assessments. He was a pretty strong man, but in the tangle which had developed this past week he was by no means strong enough to chance the whirlpools of desperate political straights. He gave up money easier now than formerly. He was at first less cautious what was done with it, was later less careful not to find out,

and at last he was willing to see its vile commissions, and to speed it heartily.

Election day was cold and rainy. "A Democrat day," said Haberly, gaily, as he drove into town early Tuesday morning.

"Where you been, John?" asked Sims, the central committeeman.

"Looking at the calves on pasture," said the astute Haberly. "Did you ever notice that the better they were fed the easier they could be kept together?"

He was about town from early in the morning till far past midnight, and made no sign that confessed his forty-eight hours continuous riding, but his jaded team stood in the stalls and sighed with a thankfulness that was almost human.

Charley, the worker, was very busy. He displayed an air of importance—even arrogance—that was not equalled by the greatest magnate in Fairview County. He talked loud, shouting from the middle of the street for the challengers to stop a certain vote. He called men by their given names, and ordered them to "Come here," with an authority that really deceived him, though, perhaps, not any one else. Still Haberly and the rest of them flattered him enough to get a great day's work done by the only man at once shrewd enough and base enough for its accomplishment.

He knew the voters who were weak, and took them up the alley, laboring with them, ranging from Sautern's back door to Ringer's back door, and from there to Steele's; making occasional dives into the Democrat politics factories, and patronizing the bar there with the most charming absence of partiality. He had plenty of money, and hurrahed for the ticket with contagious constancy, proving its merit by vicarious generosity.

The law said no saloon should be open on election day, but of course no one did more than pretend to obey that piece of legislative foolishness. The front doors were securely locked, and the windows most securely blinded; but back doors and side doors were as hospitable as ever. The law said no intoxicating liquor should be sold, bartered or given away from the hour when the polls were opened till the hour when the polls were closed. But that was a dead letter—a very dead letter—in Fairview. Should the deities who made the day great have no libations poured upon their altars?

Charley found his voters defiant, resolute against the ticket, full of argument and brave words for Poole and Frank Logan, the opposition State and the opposition national ticket. He labored with them in soggy eloquence; he talked very plainly, even offensively; but no

anger was roused. He led them around to the nearest groggery, and let them have whatever they wanted—no matter how they meant to vote. He was not a man to make enemies on account of politics. Let a man vote his own sentiments here; that was Charley's way. This was not Florida, nor yet Mississippi, and men might vote as they pleased in Fairview. And have another drink; and another; and another.

But that other ticket was a beastly thing. Wasn't a decent man on it from president down. Look at their candidates in Fairview County; Knights of the Golden Circle and secessionists—every one of them. And then look at ours. Every man on our ticket is a gentleman. Fellow can vote that straight through, and be proud of it. And they are generous men, too. They don't want a man to help them for nothing. Look here. Here's a bill that goes with every ticket. Take another drink. Now let's go.

And from defiance and self-reliance, the voter turns to tractibility, to concession, to compliance. Charley walks with him to the very polls, sees him deposit that very ballot and no other—then drops him, turns from him, abandons him, despises him with the loathing of a base man for one still baser—and catches the manager's eye, follows the

directing glance to some new victim, and continues the work of freedom.

If the voter were turbulent, he was purchased; if weak, he was driven; if honest, no one approached him. That were a blunder greater than a crime. But the workers were held responsible for the yeomen assigned them, and it was a flagrant dereliction to let one man get away.

"Isn't costing as much this year as usual, is it?" asked Sims of John Haberly, when the mid-afternoon pause gave them a little rest before the final, rushing close.

"No," said the slightly disgusted manager. "Voters are getting cheaper every year."

Each man knew his duty when the thickening crowds warned that the day was ending. A little knot around the polling place watched each approaching voter. The opposing parties were similarly manned, were armed with like weapons, and differed chiefly in the amount of ammunition to be used. The advance, the grapple with each floating prize was the same in every case. The stream began clear enough in the morning, and ran with varying translucency all day, only to thicken into a torrent of muddy waters as evening darkened toward night, until at the close every nerve and fiber of those who ran elections were

bent to leave the imprint of deepest impurity on the page of liberty's record.

All that is meant in the olden calling and anointing of kings is implied in the franchise of to-day. God chose the leaders, and set the seal of approval upon them. This divine attribute of election is wrested from deity, and lodged in the hands of men. Should they not reverently approach their duty, and exercise in purity the warrant of Omnipotence?

CHAPTER XVII.

A PATRIOT'S GOSPEL.

Ellet Grant had been sheriff a year. A thousand things which had shocked him at first were trivial to him now. He came to his office fresh from the purity of a home which did not know the deeps that lay beneath the fair fabric of their commonwealth. He found with a surprise which he soon learned to hide that what was shame to honest men was matter of pride to those in authority. He found the guns of accusation were silenced between the violators of truth in his own party and the like offenders in opposing forces. He found they met on fraternal grounds, and laughed at crimes that he had thought beyond the daring of men to do even in secret. He even found—they attended to that—his own tenure of office stained all over with the mire of corruption. Yet he did not revolt. He told these things at home more by the topics he treated silently than by the many things he talked about.

Old Wesley had been an Abolitionist at one time, and was fired with the single passion for

right and freedom. He based his prayers on that, and fully believed whatever needed justice could secure it through the straight highway of rectitude. He believed as fully now in prohibition; and when he learned by shrewd questions—which his own son had not the shrewdness to parry—that the blackness of darkness enveloped the election franchise, he gathered in silence the strength and the material for future uses. He was filled with a purpose that consumed his ordinary quiet. A light they had never seen in the old man's eyes began to tell of a work for which his final strength was fitting.

And when the next campaign came on old Wesley Grant became a power in the field.

Ellet lived at Fairview, in a cosy home in which Esther presided with a grace and sweetness that won both her and her brother prompt social recognition. The girl found with that quick intuition which is purely feminine, though not monopolized by women, that her intimacy with the Misses Haberly harmed her somewhat. But they had been the first to greet her, they had troubled themselves in a thousand ways to smooth her pathway in the town, and were bound, moreover, by their brother's services, to receive her kindest treatment. In the church, and all the little pleasant affairs that grew from that connec-

tion; in the street, and even in the ordinary meetings of the place, she found no audience so small or so large that it did not raise its eyebrows a little when she knit her fellowship with these two girls. At first Esther did not understand it. They were better dressed than she, they kept an establishment quite beyond her in elegance of appointments, and they knew so many of the little things with 'which it is a comfort to be familiar.

Yet all this did not atone, and her keen sensibilities were often wounded by the tacit refusal to extend to them the same consideration accorded to herself. A woman more selfish would have taken the hint, and dropped them; but she could not find that in her heart. It looked like the ingratitude she had so often railed against in country people transplanted to the light frivolities of town.

She was a frequent and an informal caller at the Haberly home, and both the young ladies, with their polished brother, had the most cordial entree to her house. And, after a time, the more severely she felt the ostracism of her friends, the more closely did she draw to them. She even saw many things about them that could grate upon fineness and propriety, yet glossed the little delinquencies and took no alarm. That she walked

a little closer to John Haberly in the moonlight stroll, which often took the five from home, was part of this retreat from a world that did not understand him. It was a greater part—perhaps the perfect work—of that accomplished man; but of this she took no sensible account until, the campaign being fairly opened, she found she must choose between her father's sturdy right and this man's suave diplomacy; for Wesley was in the field with the vigor of an old campaigner, and the triumphant tread of a victor. Her heart was with her father, but not—so much was she changed—with his work. And all of her—heart, soul and sense of blessedness—was with this younger man.

There had been a great temperance meeting in Fairview. It was an off year, and the lines of party were not so rigidly drawn. Hundreds had listened to the speeches, and gone away wondering why the truth should not prevail. They were wondering still more why Wesley Grant dared stand up there before that audience, and thunder his denunciation against the very ring which had made his son a sheriff. They wondered most at his familiarity with men and methods, with schemes and trades and strange results. They were amazed that he dared to state the whole truth in such an entirely open manner, and did not hesitate to prophesy that he would meet with trouble.

The burden of his speech was current matter for discussion before the day was over. Yet he got into his buggy and drove home quite undisturbed by the angry comment of the gang.

And they were angry. Argument like that from a man like that would lose them the legislative ticket, sure. It was what they might have expected from him—the ungrateful old traitor—they said. He must be stopped some way. Haberly and Ellet were talking about it in the club that night, before the regular habitues arrived. “The Club” was the large room back of the prosecuting attorney’s office; and it was frequented every night by a number of well-dressed gentlemen who were traveling very rapidly, and not in the safest direction.

“You better go out and see the old man tomorrow, Ellet. Get him to quit this infernal foolishness. There is nothing in it for him; make him see that. And there is everything in it to harm us. We will have trouble enough electing our men as it is. The votes he can control will just simply ruin us.”

Ellet would not have believed, two years before, that any man could safely designate as “infernal foolishness” anything that Wesley Grant did; but to-night he passively indorsed that valuation placed upon it. He doubted, though, his ability to change

his father to any great extent. He stood in a good deal of awe of that old Trojan. There was much in the father there was not in the son, and the latter knew it. However, he promised to drive out early to-morrow and attend service at the Pretty Lake church, eating dinner at the homestead, and doing what missionary work he could while there.

Then he impaled a very short fragment of cigar on the point of his penknife, and pursued his smoking. The other men came in shortly, and attention was transferred from the political outlook to the careful scrutiny of cards, in blocks of five. The gang was gambling.

John Haberly had always been very successful at these meetings. Some people said it made up the half of his income.

Ellet Grant walked into the old church the next day with the first headache he ever remembered carrying there. He shook hands cordially, yet modestly, with a number of men and women, and then handed Miss Haberly to a seat in the woman side of the room, deferring to the rural custom of separating the sexes. For himself, he pushed along to the open window, and filled the pauses in the service by looking out at the placid lake, and honestly wishing from the bottom of his heart that he could go back to the time when his

thoughts were light as the sunbeams that danced in the air over there by the sands. Yonder were the crumbling logs of the old pen where the sheep were kept when they came for the annual washing, just before the time to shear. A little farther was a spring, deep and clear and cold and grateful. Farther still was the swimming hole, and his heart gave a throb as he thought of the cool, delicious sensation, that flight through the air, that plunge, used to yield him. A little nearer was the shallow bottom, where scores and scores had walked down to holy baptism, their hearts as pure as the glistening water that made a pathway for the setting sun.

All that was joyful, and all that was tearful in his boy life, had passed within hearing of this cliff-bound lake.

Wesley Grant gave his son and the young lady his customary cordial greeting, but Ellet could see from the start his mission here was a failure. The old man seemed a very Gibraltar of purpose. At dinner the commonest things were talked of. Mother missed Esther, and did not understand why she had not come home. Ellet's explanation that his sister had driven with Haberly to Fayette for the day was not entirely satisfying. Alice was lonesome, and promised herself a visit in town.

After dinner Ellet and his father sat on the front porch and talked. The young man tried to begin on a strain somewhat in harmony with what he knew the boys were saying in town. He stumbled a little at first, but as Wesley let him go without contradiction, or even interruption, he grew surer of his ground, and talked very plainly. But his castle of dictation crumbled into the olden condition of boyish respect when his father asked him:

“Who told you to say that?”

“Well, no one in particular; but it is the way we all feel about it; and—”

“Unfortunately, I cannot help how you feel. If I could, you might feel better.” Ellet’s conscience caught that thrust. “You and I need no false assumption between us. We know each other, and I know a good many more things than you think I do. They are getting you down, Ellet; and I never thought you were weak enough to let them. There is something so wrong in that system in town that it must be revolutionized. It is not simply a slimy monster; washing won’t help it. It is a deadly monster; it must be killed. I am going to live to see the day when not a drop of grog is sold in Fairview.”

“You’ll never do it, father.”

“Should I not? Is it not right? Isn’t it a thing to be desired?”

"Yes, vastly. But you could never enforce that sort of a law, even if you had it made; and you can't make it. You can't carry elections. It takes money and manipulation. You won't use money, and you can't manipulate."

"Ellet, a man don't have to buy what he already owns. Our men will vote our way because they really want to. You couldn't hire or scare them to do anything else. A very dangerous slave is the freeman who sells his suffrage. But he is safety beside the man who buys it. That is simply horrible. It rocks the very foundation stones of freedom. You have no right to buy one ballot. It is worse than gun, or knife, or fagot. Scare him, abuse him, wound him, and he will rise some day to defy you—if he has a drop of the blood of a freeman in his veins. But buy him, and you debauch him forever. We must get back to first principles, or we are a lost nation. Rum rule must go down, or we go down. Ellet, there will be a law made some day that will say 'Hands off!' to you people. It will make it a penitentiary offense to buy a single ballot. Your Johns and your Charleys and all the rest of the pestilent brood will have to keep their distance, and will not be allowed to see whether the men they have bought are delivering the goods or not. They will have to stand aside, and see

voters vote as they will. That ends corruption."

"Oh, no it won't. I've heard of that kind of a law, and whenever they pass that sort of a thing the fellows that now get in their work at the polls will simply get the cattle drunk, and keep them from voting at all. They will hire them to stay away all day. It will be cheaper than it is now, and just as effective."

"Then, Ellet, in the name of a race in danger, can you see any other way out than the abolition of the drink evil? If this is true, must we not go to the bottom, and root out the tree in the branches of which your Ringers, and your Steeles, and your Sauterns flourish? Don't you see what it is doing?"

"Oh, yes; but surely you know there is not enough public sentiment now to endorse such a radical course."

"That's the language of a traitor, Ellet. Put it back into the mouth of the man who taught it to you. You know I am right, yet you oppose me. You want what I want, yet you work against me. You talk of a lack of public sentiment, yet you help to weaken what public sentiment there is. Either your words or your actions convict you of insincerity. Put yourself on my side—on the side you admit is right—and then the sentiment will

be that much stronger. Why do men hold so close to what they know is wrong? Why do they pretend to wish for better things when they encourage worse things? Do they think they deceive anybody? Actions speak louder than words. What they work for, they want."

"Oh, they don't try to deceive anybody. They are as much opposed to drunkenness as you are; but they are in favor of saloons, as things are now, and until people get educated up to better things. Saloons make business. Where there are none, there is no trade. If no liquor were sold in Fairview I know lots of men who wouldn't go there twice a year. They would patronize some place where they could get a drink when they wanted it. But, any way, father; about this campaign work of yours."

"Now, never you mind about this campaign work of mine. You go back to John Haberly, and Bill Sims, and Sam Sautern, and all the rest, and tell them I am out to stay. I am one of a thousand men who are working day and night for the legislature—and we are going to get it. Mark my word, we will pass a law making it a felony to buy, sell or give away one drop of liquor—as a beverage."

"Oh, that kind of a law would be unconstitutional. The whisky men would kill it in no time.

They would have a test case moved to the top of the Supreme Court docket—everything else there might wait—and they would get a decision that would put your cause back twenty years.”

“Then why don’t your fellows let me alone? They know that is the kind of a law I am after, and they have known it from the start. If it is what they want, too, why are they riding all night, and spending money like the wind, and drugging this whole State with alcohol—just to beat us? They don’t want it; but we will have it; and all the scheming, and swilling and corruption of the gang cannot stop it. God pity me that I am saying this to my own son! God send I shall never have worse to say to him!”

He had risen. At the start the old man’s frame was tense with energy. At the last his eyes were swimming in tears, and he turned away to hide the weakness.

This was not the kind of a Sunday afternoon Ellet remembered at the farm. He tried to shake off the feeling of strangeness and distance which chilled and separated him from that perfect comfort of the past. He walked through the rooms, noted the little changes, begged Alice to play, and then left before she had finished. He looked at the stock, and so came at last to the barn. The floors were clean, the mows were full. The fra-

grance and quiet of harvests completed filled the wide walls with restfulness. Here in the old temple of a boy's abandon, he caught the scents that are ever the same, and—man as he was—bowed his head in silent, tearless, choking anguish.

After that, resentment. He brought out his horses, and began hitching them to the buggy. He had driven up in front of the house before they knew he intended leaving. Then Miss Haberly bustled around with the turmoil of a small woman, and made her adieux. Alice kissed her great, strong brother good-bye, and searched in his face for the demon that had driven the angels from the homestead.

She found it.

"Ellet," said Wesley, coming around the house from the farther porch, "going home?"

"Yes; it will be sundown by the time we are there. Come in when you can. Good-bye."

"Good-bye. But, Ellet. Don't lay up what I say as said against you; it's only against your weak and suicidal doctrine. But don't let any of the fellows flatter themselves that this thing will blow over by election time. I give you fair warning. It's our legislature. We will have the law, or there won't be a per diem bill passed in ten years."

“All right, father,” replied the young man, and he thought what a measureless gulf there was between his broader plane and the narrow confines of all one-ideaed men.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A NIGHT WITH THE BOYS.

Esther and Haberly had not yet reached home when Ellet returned. He went to the restaurant for supper, and then dropped into the saloon, to see if any one was there. He found a few of the boys, and they tempered all news exchanges with drinks at the bar. He could not report his father won over to the right, and found—as he had anticipated—that he must range himself in antagonism to the patriarch. That night he heard harder things said of old Wesley Grant than a year ago he would have thought any man would dare say of him in any presence—not counting his own. The boys were very angry. They were stout in the denial of strength to the hated movement, but the very warmth of their assertion belied its sincerity. Finally, they went up stairs, where Brubaker and Tom Fisher and some others were deeply hidden in cigar smoke and draw poker.

“Set in, Ellet,” said Brubaker, cordially. “Maybe you’ll change my luck.” And he carelessly fingered a diminished stack of celluloid chips.

The day had fitted Ellet for just such a diversion. The disappointing visit to the homestead, the spirit of unnatural antagonism awakened there, the tacit acknowledgement of his own comradery with baseness, and something of the loosening of all bonds—filial, fraternal and patriotic—combined to change him from what he had been to what he dreaded being. Then, the liquor which other men could absorb without affecting their usual moods and actions, had the effect of numbing one side of his nature while it roused another to dangerous alertness.

He took a place at the table, and invested generously. For half an hour the smoky goddess smiled upon him, and he drew rare pleasure from the groans that marked his winning from these men. He wanted to inflict suffering. There was no mercy in his betting. He took Tom Fisher's last dollar, and brutally refused to loan him a dime. He was cross and crabbed with the players, and threw down his winning cards with the air of one who could crush them, and would do it—glorying.

He plunged from one success to another as the hours sped by, meeting the wilder play of Brubaker and Sautern till his hour of triumph had passed. Then he began losing. Had he waited for morning with half the patience they had

waited for luck, he might not have fallen. But as the hour hand slowly fell from vertical to horizontal, then dipped to pendant, Ellet Grant's winnings and ten times their amount beside were scattered in wild, reckless, unskilled struggles.

He left the room at daylight, badly compromised, and scarcely able to conceive the disaster that had settled upon him. He walked out into the clear air, pushed back his hat to cool his forehead, and went away wondering how so stupendous a fall had been possible. His heart ached that the man he had been could do a thing so vile. He kept his thoughts from those who had despoiled him. Low as they were, was he any better?

"Sheriff Grant, good-morning."

It was the hearty, deep-toned greeting of Elder Kimball, the preacher, and it marked a severer phase of his abasement. Would that man speak to him if the work of the last night were in view?

Ah, was it not in view? Did not all these people—early movers in an honest day—did not they know? Could not they see it on his face, in his clothes, through his manner? Was he able to disguise it? Had not that one and this one glanced at him in the most chilling of manners?

"Go home, Ellet," he said to himself, bitterly. Then he tried to save what little was left. They should never do that with him again. Was not

he strong enough? Had not he always been better than they? He would not—he *would* not play one more time.

So he dragged a weary frame and a heavy heart over his threshold. Esther was not in the house. She had not been there all night. At first he wondered where she was, then he welcomed the freedom her absence gave to him to go to his room and sleep. He lay on the bed a long time, picturing the scenes of that awful game, and vowing eternal abstinence hereafter. Hands of cards drifted past his wide, staring, smarting eyes, like visions sent to haunt him. Again in fancy he had them in his power, and recouped his losses, only sinking to sleep at last from absolute exhaustion.

Late in the afternoon he roused, a headache remaining to link this wasted day with last night's excesses. As he dressed himself his load seemed lighter than in the morning. He was more indifferent or more hopeful—he hardly knew which. But surely there was some way out. He was awake now, and at himself; he knew there was plain sailing ahead, after all. He had always found some resource effective. He never had been compelled to suffer. He would not now. He had always been a leader among men, and he was resolved to so continue.

Esther was busy in the sewing-room when he went down stairs.

"Where were you last night?" was his greeting.

"Well, where were you?" was her response.

Ellet looked at his sister angrily. Some unfamiliar demon in him stirred to strike her. He checked the impulse, while a wave of hot blood suffused his face and neck. It shamed him, and he ate in silence the meal she had prepared, groping in a dull brain for some weapon with which to conquer the ascendancy. Something like cool defiance in the girl humbled him, and dulled the edge of his resentment. Something like abandon in her manner startled him.

But he was still more humbled, still more startled, when he went down street and found the story of his losses had already cheered the ears of all the gossips in town. Half a dozen men who never played dropped hints which showed the facts were public property. Sautern stood, aproned and smiling, in his door. He had been at business all day. Brubaker was tilting back in a chair before the drug store, in his habitual fashion. They bowed and spoke, but he could not meet their eyes; they knew too much. Yet they did not know more than all these other men.

Ellet went to the office, and found he had been needed badly. He knew he was not strong enough to be defiant. He must explain. God pity the man who has to apologize!

He told them he had spent the day at his father's place, and had just arrived in town.

"But I saw you put up your horses at sundown last night," said an indignant tax-payer. "I know where you were, and shall make it my business that others know."

He would not be silenced, and went away loud in his wrathful threatenings. Ellet's only hope was that he would meet some of the boys, who, for the sake of the party, would induce him to keep still.

A deputy had made some collections, and could show no record of the fact. The litigant had been notified to come in and settle. He came with his receipt, and when he had fixed the error in the sheriff's office, made bold to tell Ellet he was done voting for him.

"You've got a pack of worthless rascals about you," he said, angrily. "I thought you was a model man, Grant, when you went in; thought you was one of my kind, and lots of—"

"Well, I am not one of your kind," shouted the sheriff. "Thank God for that." And the terrified countryman went away with very slender

faith in anything that looked like a county officer. "Something spoils 'em," he mused, as he drove home through the dust.

But the complaint was deserved, and Ellet knew it. He was angry with the deputy for the oversight, but felt instinctively he dared not now say to him all that he wished. The deputy was too well backed.

Taken altogether, the day was too much for him. He stopped in at Ringer's after the office was closed, and tried to console himself with a drink. Charley, the worker, was there with some of the boys.

"Thought you were going to build fence for Sims to-day," remarked Ellet.

"Naw," said Charley; "didn't feel like it this morning. Sims aint in no hurry, no way. I'll begin to-morrow, if the boys don't go fishing; and Ellet, when I do build that fence he'll have a hummer. I can build more fence in a day, and build it straighter, than ary other man in Fairview County."

"What are you going to take, Charley?" asked Ellet. In all the worker's boasting there was an undercurrent of pleading in a different tongue, which ran this way: "Ask me to drink. Ask me to drink. Ask me to drink." Ellet could no more disregard it than he could the man's presence.

And when Charley drank, the boys drank. It made quite a wreck of the bill the sheriff threw down. Ringer saw that, and, remembering last night, rather sympathized with Ellet. Ringer knew all about the escapade in the gambling room, and was not a man to steel his heart against suffering. He would be generous, and bestow a favor on a losing man.

“Have one with me,” he said.

CHAPTER XIX.

BEYOND ALL PARDON.

As he neared his house, Ellet saw his mother's saddle horse at his gate. He did not want to meet her, yet he must. Mrs. Grant met him at the side door, and took his hand between her own hard yet gentle palms. She was a very fountain of kindness, and she loved so to comfort and caress her children. She touched his face, and studied him sharply, while her tongue was busy with pleasant inquiries.

"You look so worried, dear. Father was too hard with you yesterday, but he doesn't mean to be. He loves you, Ellet. And you have fever, too; and your breath is bad." This without a thought of probing. "You must do something, or you will both be sick. See Esther, too. She isn't well. You don't take care of her. Why, we thought what a great thing it was going to be when you were sheriff and lived in town, and Esther kept house for you. Do you remember—"

"Mother, for mercy's sake, hush!" cried her tortured son, almost beside himself. It was the

last addition to the crushing burden whose harassing fragments had worn quite to the quick.

"Why, Ellet," says the mother, not in a harsher but in a gently protesting tone, "do I bother you? Have I said something to wound you?" Then the dignity of maternity tempered a little the boundless charity, and endless self-forgetfulness. "Maybe you need a word or two. Let mother show you where—"

"I will not stand it. I tell you to be still. I am not a child."

"No, you are a man. If you were a child I could not blame you when your plain duty was neglected. You are a man and must face these things. No one will be kinder than your mother in telling you the truth; but you must hear it. Where were you, and where was your sister last—"

"Mother, I swear to God if you don't stop I will put you out of my house. What possesses you to go in this way? What do you mean?"

"I mean that it is high time you faced the truth. Listen, Ellet. This can't go on. Look where you are standing. See where you came from. See where you both are going. Remember, it is not you alone who stands or falls, but your sister—"

He had been moving about the room swiftly, burning with suppressed anger, pierced with the

consciousness of a wrong so great he was only dimly beginning to realize it. As she persisted with a mother's freedom, yet with a mother's tenderness, even to the last, it seemed a whip of scorpions had stung his flesh in each word she uttered. So exasperating was her perfect fearlessness, her disregard of his authority, that at the final charge of trusts betrayed, he sprang forward and grasped her shoulder roughly.

The good woman was not facing him at the moment, for he had passed behind her in his caged pacing about the floor. But the instant the hand alighted his mother started and turned upon him such a countenance as few sons—pray God—ever see. She did not flinch or try to escape him. She only met his eyes, and blazed the love that spanned his thirty years, clear back of birth, straight in the face so touched and marred by passion. Esther ran weeping from the room, and for a moment this tableau rested.

But some devil hot from hell whispered, "You are a man. You must be respected." And he lifted his threatening finger before his mother's face, and said, stooping forward in rage and warning:

"Now, stop!" He was livid with passion and strong drink.

"You struck me, Ellet," she said, quite breathlessly.

He made no response, and she turned from him slowly, amazement melting again to mother love, her startled eyes softening to the tenderness that came so straight from the heart. She found her wraps, tied the black bonnet on over the smooth gray hairs, then went from the house alone and silently. Without assistance she led her pony to the block, without assistance she mounted him, and without one sign of penitence from the man who was carrying her flesh and blood—aye, and her heavy heart—down to ruin with him, she rode slowly away.

She rode slowly away, sitting upright and weeping silently as the first miles were passed, then sobbing and clinging to the saddle horns as the way grew longer, then stopping and dismounting finally, too weak to keep her seat. Heaven was kind to her, and no one came that way. She sat by the roadside, near her wondering beast, and poured out her cruel load of sorrows. With them went the godlike prayer that though this cup might not pass by, some touch of grace might find a blessing in it.

She could not mount again, and walked home wearily.

When Esther returned the room was empty. Ellet had gone down town. He would teach her a lesson, too. He had not meant to touch his mother, but now that it was done, he would not

be so unmanly as to show a sign of relenting. He tried to contend he was not to blame. Any man would be justified in doing the same thing under the same circumstances.

But it was not easy. Boy and man, he had never lacked loving. Never once had a hand been raised against him, however perverse, however heartless his youthful wrongs might be. Never once had he felt the weight of a finger in punishment, nor ever seen the brow contract in threatenings. Gentleness, kindness, patience had been the cords that braided, bound, the family as one. Not a reasonable wish had ever gone ungratified in all these years. Not an hour of pain nor a day of disappointment, but tenderness and sympathy had lightened the burden and hastened relief. And he had not been insensible to all this.

Ellet had dwelt in such good-fellowship with father, mother and sisters. They were comrades with him, strengthened by his power and charmed by his grace. He had been a sort of centre about which all willingly revolved, yet had been noble enough to never for an instant arrogate dominance. For all their goodness he knew he had given a man's most rich return—he had been worthy of it. Never till now, when all the world seemed out of joint, had one shadow come between him and his kindred.

And it was bitter. As the exhilarated brain became a dull, aching brain, that instant in his sitting room swelled to centuries of sin, which nothing could atone. His own mother? Did this hand touch mother? She who had—

Here, this was madding. He must tide it over some way. More liquor would do it. No, liquor had caused this very thing. What matter? He must forget it now or go crazy. After awhile—to-morrow—any time—he could get himself together, and think this out. But now—

“Jap, give me a little rye.”

Jap complied, and then mentally weighed the man before him.

“At first they own Sautern; in the middle it’s a stand-off; at the end, Sautern owns them. Ellet’s about ready to deed himself over, and it’s a little early, too.”

CHAPTER XX.

AFTER THAT—THE DELUGE.

The campaign was drawing to a close. It had been an unusually warm one, considering that no national question was at issue. All over the State the Prohibitionists had been very active, and as the final day drew closer they became jubilant. An "off year" furnished them the best chance to capture the legislature; and, the law once enacted, they had abiding faith in its permanence and enforcement. The men against them had watched the contest with frown and threat; with rising rage as the spirits of the crusaders were lifted up, until here in the last fortnight, when the reports from other counties showed the probable triumph of the new creed, nothing short of curses and violence could adequately express their disapprobation.

The *Republican* was in the fight with all the editor's energy and enthusiasm. Thompson had had his way with Poole, and, his friend elected, had clambered back into the party fold with becoming meekness. He was still a stickler for what he

considered his position, and declined with thanks all of Sims' or Sautern's editorial ravings. Then he squared himself by belaboring an offender with all their zest, and in language a great deal better than they could have used. He was still good friends with Poole; and, for that matter, Poole seemed to fraternize rather amiably with all the old crowd. He chaffed them about their defeat two years ago, and they cursed him in round terms—which meant no offense, and were easily forgiven. He threatened them with a severer calamity this fall, and they told him to make hay while the sun shone; it would be his last chance.

“You aint enforced no law,” said Sims, “and when we down you this fall you will be as flat as a pancake. We know you, Poole and we won't have you. And the Prohibs know you, and they will be done with you, too. What you going at, anyhow, when this term is over?”

“Going to begin on my next term,” replied the prosecutor, stoutly. “I have enforced no new law because you fellows bought up the legislature, and did not give us any to enforce. But I have socked four convictions home under the old law, and that is as much as you want. The Prohibs know I am safe enough. Don't you worry about their throwing me over.”

“Suppose we buy up the legislature this year, too,” suggested Haberly.

“Much obliged for the concession that it will be ours to sell. But, John, I don’t think you can do it. I figure that there will be a majority in the house pledged to a prohibitory law. You can’t beat that, any way you work. Then there will be seven more—two from Allen County, and one each from Vigo, Morgan, Fairview, Porter and Posey—who will be elected by the Prohibs against straight party candidates. That will make a pretty steep job for your legislative commission men and dealers in majorities. In this county the Prohibs will elect all they are after—me and the representative. No, mark my word, John, there will be a good majority pledged for prohibition.”

“If it wasn’t for old Wesley Grant,” sighed Sims, dejectedly. “That man is the backbone of the whole darned fight in this State. He goes everywhere. They call for him in every town from South Bend to Mt. Vernon, and from Richmond to Terre Haute. The old traitor seems to have set the whole State ablaze with his foolishness. And wherever he goes he makes heaps of votes agin us.”

“Well, he won’t make no more,” said Sautern confidently. Poole and all the rest looked up at the oracle. “He won’t make no more votes, nor

no more speeches. I tell you that," said the big man, and he lifted his huge frame upright, and sauntered with the air of an emperor at ease over to his bar room.

"What's Sautern got?" asked Sims.

"Something on the sheriff, I am afraid," replied Haberly. "I have tried my best to keep Ellet out of that man's way, but he just goes back there in spite of me. He is making a wreck of himself. In another year he will be fit for an asylum—and a poor-house, too—if he keeps on."

The manager read some undercurrent of ill omen in Sautern's words, and, when the latter had gone some minutes, rose and followed him across the street.

"I'll bet a hundred dollars they don't stop old Wesley," said Poole.

"I'll have to take you," said Brubaker.

Over at the saloon Haberly found Sautern enjoying a fresh cigar, and sitting in the cool breeze at the back window.

"What is it about Wesley Grant?" he asked directly, though he let his eyes wander carelessly out across the river, toward the pretty home of the sheriff.

"Well, it's enough," vouchsafed the saloon keeper.

"How are you going to try and stop him?"

“Well, I’ll stop him.”

It took an hour of questioning to bring from Sautern the story he wished to tell, and intended telling, yet which he felt the greatest disinclination to giving up as soon as he found some man who wanted to hear it.

Ellet had been unfit for duty three several times, a week at a time. Men said he was sick, but all Fairview knew he was drunk. He had been gambling beyond all rules of prudence, and had lost more than he owned. Uncle Dave Edwards, who was on the sheriff’s bond, had been in town twice to see about it, and would come again to-morrow, to ask release. Either Ellet must fix things up—which he could not do—or they would take the office from him. If they went through his books to-day they would find him defaulter for thousands.

Haberly was commissioned to see Wesley when he arrived, and put the facts before him.

The train rolled up to the station with that bell-ringing and whistle-blowing which Indiana laws had conjured into one unceasing pandemonium. The brakemen and conductor stepped down before the cars stopped, with that jaunty air they affect in the country, and the idle crowd gathered a little closer to see who arrived and who departed.

First among the passengers to set foot on the Fairview platform was Wesley Grant. His white hairs were crowned with a broad slouch hat; his gray clothes were the garments of a man of means and importance; his grip was the ammunition wagon of a tireless campaigner. He turned from the car without hesitation, and started swiftly up town. John Haberly overtook him.

"Helloa, Wesley," he said, cordially, "where have you been?"

Now, Wesley Grant had lived a life of stern sincerity for so long that any simulation was distasteful to him. He thought he had reason enough for distrusting John Haberly, and he did distrust him. He did not want to fraternize with him, and he did not want to pretend he did. This campaign had taught him to meet, face to face, apologists for the darkest of earth's damnations, yet to preserve before them the unruffled front of one who can conserve his powers. So he turned, met the frank gaze of the dexterous manager, and replied:

"I have been at work preparing for a Prohibition legislature, John."

"Are you going to elect it?"

"We will." This with a ringing certainty, and a lighting smile that showed how sweet was the anticipation of victory.

“Wesley, come up here into my office. I want to talk with you about a matter of importance to me, but of more importance to Ellet and yourself.” Haberly had paused at the foot of his stairs, and as Wesley halted near him the two men fronted squarely. There was warning in the manager’s eyes, but the glance was met and conquered by the older man’s stern rectitude.

“John, I will not go up into your office. If you or any of your crowd have something to say to me, you must say it in public. I will have no misunderstanding about my relations with the gang.”

All the way up town men had passed them, had pressed up to shake old Wesley’s hand or say a word of greeting or encouragement. While these two stood here quite a group surrounded them, some to welcome a leader returned, others to stand and observe them.

“It is too public a place,” said Haberly, with something like distress in his voice. “What I have to say will be better said in private.” He waited. Old Wesley’s smile of strength and confidence vanished. His reception at his own town, after successes at many others, had gratified him. The tone of John Haberly’s warning had banished it all. Yet he was a Spartan. He knew his hands were clean, and all the light of all the universe

might be turned upon them. It could disclose no shame.

"Speak out, John. If you are going to ask me to name my price for silence, say so. If you are going to threaten me, let that be public, too. I cannot afford, and my party cannot afford, to have anything done in the dark. Speak out."

Haberly hesitated.

"Pick out any three good, trusty men," he said at last, just as the veteran showed by his attitude that the conference was at an end; "pick them out, and come up. I cannot tell you here."

The old man grew paler. Evidently, affairs were serious. But he was resolute, and through the dread of something, not all unexpected, he forced a smile to his lips and replied, shaking his head as one not easily deceived:

"You cannot compromise me, Haberly. I will not go up in your office. I have no business there. If you have anything to say to me, come to Poole's office. I will be there for an hour. But you better bring a friend, for I will bring one. We want to understand each other."

Half an hour later the old man mounted the creaking steps, followed by two friends whom he could trust. He was gay with bits of cheer from the work in other fields, and filled to exuberance with a nervous energy. But he felt as he lifted

one foot above the other that he was climbing to doom. It abated not a whit of the man's courage or unquailing front, but in his heart he found the picture of a man condemned, mounting the rough stairway to strangulation. He thought of the bravado some of them had shown, and in the darkness of this moment he could find no nobler sense to buoy up his tortured spirit. The exertion made his heart beat quicker, and a flitting pain there came to warn him. He read in that instant of sharp suffering what the end would be; and in that consummation, which was far lighter than the way that lay between, he waked the forces that he needed now.

"I'll die game," he muttered, and threw back his shoulders as he struggled for air; he tossed his hands far apart, as if the proof that shackles were not on them was needed, and was grateful.

Poole placed chairs for his visitors. Haberly was already there with Vernon, one of the bondsmen, and with Petcher, Uncle Dave Edwards' attorney.

"Well, John," said Wesley, "what do you want to say?"

"It aint an easy thing," began the politician, but he was interrupted.

"I am not looking for easy things. Don't spare me, if you can bear it."

The younger man was stung to lay aside all courtesy. Something in his conscience hardened him toward that white-haired veteran. We are told that nothing so adds to the anger one feels toward a man as the recollection that one has injured him.

"Ellet is short in his accounts."

"Well, which of you got the money?"

"And his bondsmen want to get out. Unless the books are squared Ellet will be arrested."

"How much does he lack?"

"It will take four thousand dollars to settle everything without prosecution. Then he must resign."

"Is that all you want to say?"

"Not quite. You can save the office to him, after his shortage is fixed up, and do it easily."

"How?"

"Stay at home till after election."

"Will that be enough?"

"You might write a letter, declaring against certain candidates that the Prohibs are running; but go to no more meetings, make no more speeches, and promise your vote for the straight nominees. After that—"

"The deluge!" exclaimed the farmer, contemptuously. "Say, John, you fellows are after the wrong man. You cannot dictate one thing to

me. I am too old. You are too corrupt. Poole, write me a power of attorney. I have not half that amount on hand, but I give you full authority to collect, draw what I have on deposit, and mortgage or sell the Pretty Lake farm to raise all that is needed. If it comes to that, John, I can settle the shortages of your whole gang—shortages that you always cover up if the rascal remains useful.”

There was a tinge of boasting in the taunt. He seemed to need some little brutality in this bitter struggle.

“Now, Poole”—he had risen after signing the paper—“stand between the boy and all danger. Save me all you can, but—save him first, Poole.”

That was the certain strain of weakness. Voice and manner published his feelings. He turned quickly, and was half way to the door when Haberly called out:

“How about keeping him in office? How about you helping us in the election?”

“Keep him in office, or put him out, John. Do just as you like. I am saying, and every dollar I own is saying, that no child of mine shall be dishonored while I can prevent it. But you can get nothing more from me. Only this”—and he turned swiftly and with flashing eyes on the trio—“I’ll double my efforts to down the ring. If this is my

last year on earth I shall die making odious the engine that has crushed my boy."

He went down stairs alone, but for an instant after reaching the street he could not see the men who spoke to him in passing. He was dizzy and faint. He had consciousness enough to know what was the matter, and how to escape. Turning his blanched face to the wall, he rested his hand against the building, and seemed to be studying, reflecting, meditating some puzzling question. But he knew he could not long remain so. Others passed, and either spoke or hesitated curiously. He thought again, "But I'll die game," and with that same sensation of climbing to a scaffold, he roused himself, and faced the future.

Alice had driven to town to meet him, and he walked up to Ellet's house where he knew she would wait for him. The girls saw him coming and met him at the gate, urging him to go in and rest. But he declined, though not roughly. He must hurry home, for to-morrow the Republicans held a big meeting in town, which he must attend; and in the evening he must address his friends at the court-house square. He kissed Esther with a tenderness that surprised her, used as she was to the expression of paternal affection. As he lifted his face from hers, the old man's hand rested on her shoulder a moment, then

passed gently upward until it was laid lovingly about her head. She raised her eyes again to his, and then flushed hotly with what she read there.

That was all. He walked away, helped Alice in the buggy, and drove home.

CHAPTER XXI.

IN CIDER-MAKING TIME.

Early next morning Ellet came to the farm. He wore his best clothes, and had something of his olden air of tidiness and good keeping. He left the team at the hitching post, adjusted the harness a little, passing around the horses, and so came to the gate. Right there he was met by his father. He had not been at the homestead since that Sunday when he drove away with the indignant sense of superiority. In what abasement, with what shamed gratitude he now returned. He lifted the latch and began to thank the patriarch for the great service of yesterday.

"Ellet," said the old man, interrupting his somewhat stammering speech, "this farm isn't big enough for you and me too. You better stay away till I get through with it. It rests with you whether you take it then. But while I am here you can't come in."

"Why, father," he began. This blow was so unexpected, yet so richly merited, that this young man felt the acme of his troubles had indeed been

reached; that the keenest possible retribution had now been visited upon him. Yet he could not turn away so. He knew his degradation, but the sense of a home, a haven, here was so strong that it seemed his father could not mean so much of sternness; and he said again—"Why, father!"

"Young man, you struck your mother. When you can wipe that out, come home."

And the culprit turned away without one word of justification. He went to the team again, untied the horses blindly, climbed in the buggy, and drove away.

The distant forests have changed from deep green to crimson and brown. The hedgeways are swaying slightly, and dropping leaves with every motion. The oak trees by the roadside have painted their foliage a rich wine color, and the hickory that stands on the line fence row sends down shelled nuts as he passes. Hazel bushes hold up great handfuls of brown treasures in wide-open husks, and tempt him to desert the shadow of life for a day in the sun. Squirrels are bolder. Frosts have warned them of cheerless days when the improvident must suffer, and they scamper along the brown top rails of fences, with pouches full of provisions. Weeds have granted a truce, and ceased growing, and stand with drooped head, as if regretting the work they gave

the husbandman. Corn is maturing. Its tassels have lost their lustre, and waft withered blossoms to the soft, warm ground. The blades have caught the blighting frost, and bend their broad, velvety surfaces in sheer regret. The husk is gray and dry. It breaks from the swelling ear, and reveals sharp rows of grain, swiftly hardening in the air and sun. Through the long aisles of the field vagrant breezes stray, and the tall, slender maize bows with a hum of homage, and a rustle of respectful applause.

Grass on the roadside is dun in color. It has finished its work in the passing year, and has strengthened its hold in the earth, forgetful of appearances above ground.

The very road is an autumn highway. The track is level and hard and smooth; the dust is heavy and does not rise. The air is as clear as an ocean cavern, and sounds from the woods drift across the brown fields, mellowed but audible; and over all swings the glorious haze of Indian summer. Far away banks of blue smoke hide the outlines of the hills, and earth is one mirage of heaven.

When Ellet reached town that night, the burden of his punishment heavy upon him, he was conscious of but one thing—a strong revulsion from the influences that had debased him. It did

not amount to rage against any one, and was the more likely to last that it was rather subdued in color. But he had no desires, felt no tendencies of taste or habit to turn in and follow any of the paths that had led him from rectitude and manliness. He went home and put up the team, then sat on the porch and read till tea was ready. He was not effusive in his kindness to Esther, and was rather more alert than in the old days. No reference to the recent past was made by either of them, but she could see that between to-day and yesterday a wall was builded that would not be thrown down.

CHAPTER XXII.

THEY MET IN AN UPPER ROOM.

Major Poole made an accurate forecast of the result of the election. In the legislature there was a majority of ten who had been elected on the platform demanding a prohibitory law.

For the first time it seemed certain the measure would pass. No one appeared to question that. Papers and politicians all over the State conceded victory to the temperance men, and trimmers were busy getting ready for a change of heart. The new forces were held well in hand by Dean, of Fairview. He was admittedly the ablest and shrewdest man in the new army. His comrades held aloof, and when the caucus nominees struggled for a mastery, he named the speaker. When the managers of the old party came to him, Dean was firm. He could afford to be.

"You fellows chose Hollowell," he said, "and we will help you elect him speaker. If you don't, we will vote for a straight Prohibitionist, and the Democrats will elect the presiding officer. Hollowell is as good a Republican as there is in your

party, and he is satisfactory to us. We care nothing for the office, but we want the law. If you want to run the House, let us have our way about this matter. If you don't, you wont run it—that's all."

There was no use arguing with him. He could keep that little herd of new party men together, and keep them voting as principle dictated, till the Democrats filled every office in the legislature. That was a consummation devoutly to be dreaded, and they knew that if he remained firm they must surrender something.

Dean must be fixed.

They went to him next day with a proposition. He and one man from his little party should meet four men from the old party, and they would map out a programme. Quarreling would do no good, and might do a deal of harm—to the old party.

"Aside from prohibition, our aims are the same," said Tabor. "You fellows naturally belong to our crowd, and we naturally believe in your doctrine. But the time is not ripe for it yet. Still, if you insist on it, and the people seem to demand it, we will have to adjust matters. Now, what we want is to know just what you want. I guess things can be arranged so you can be gratified, and we can control the House."

“Give us the law, and you can have the offices,” said Dean, sententiously. “That’s Wesley Grant’s doctrine.”

Dean and his confrere went to the place appointed. He was old enough to have known better; and, indeed, he had a premonition that the stern sense of the farmer chief would have opposed the step. But he trusted his skill and his knowledge of men to bring him out in no way loser.

It was in an upper room of a great hotel. When Dean and his companion entered they found a rather jolly party. A State officer and a well-known lobbyist were present. They had been courting the cup which cheers and oft inebriates. With them was an ex-State official from an adjoining commonwealth, and an ex-colonel of national reputation. The latter, whom Dean took to be visitors, were introduced with hearty, boisterous formality of State capital life, and then all resumed their chairs. The Colonel was telling a story, and the State officer urged him to go back and begin again, for the benefit of Dean and his friend. When it was done all hands laughed very heartily, and the dignitary from a sister State was reminded of an incident somewhat like it. While he was talking a waiter came in with more bottles and glasses, and the lobbyist began pouring out wine.

"Mr. Dean, do you drink?" he asked, very respectfully.

"No, sir," said the prohibition leader; but he felt rather uncomfortable.

"I hope you take no offense at our touching it lightly."

"We can stand it if you can," said the man who had come here to dictate. Then the story was resumed. The marks of conviviality were removed, and for a time the most decorous air pervaded the room. But not one of the gentlemen left, even when the subject which brought Dean and his friend was broached. It seemed a thing they could all talk about. Dean had a very definite idea of what he wanted, and could not be induced to recede from the position originally taken.

The large argument of what patriotism demanded was used. The ultimate effect this stand would have on the party was shown him. The lesser importance of immediate prohibition was pointed out. But he stood firm. It was now or never with him.

"Take the offices and give us the law. If you don't fix that up we will beat every man your caucus names to-morrow. We can do it. We have been chosen and pledged to do it, and it is right we should."

There was no answering that argument. So they rested awhile, and talked of other affairs.

"This isn't a matter just affecting Indiana," said the visiting dignitary, returning later to the charge. "Its influence reaches to other States. If you adopt this amendment it will split your old party wide open. More than that, it will draw after it a like action in other States. Your success in Indiana means a like success in at least five other States here in the middle West. And that means the end of the Republican party; for, although all Prohibitionists are Republicans, all Republicans are not Prohibitionists. Thousands of them will go over to the enemy. You can read a warning in Glick, of Kansas. What happened then and there will happen again and will happen everywhere—in every State that nurses this heresy—till men will learn to take what they can get, and wait for prohibition till the country is ready for it. Surely you don't want to see every northern State lost to the Republicans."

"No, I don't. But take your State, for instance. It is not corrupt as is Indiana. Why, here the saloon has come to be what the church once was in politics. It is not only supreme authority—it is all the authority there is. Things have come to such a pass that every measure must be approved by the rum power before it can be adopted by the

people. What that power wants the people have to give; what it don't want, no one is strong enough to give—unless we are to-day. It convicts, acquits, dignifies, abases, enforces, annuls, enacts anew—and wields in all respects the imperial power. No other State is as saturated with it as is Indiana."

"There's where you are wrong," said the visitor. "You give yourself that bad name, and without reason. Ohio, Illinois, any of them, are worse. If Justice is asleep in Indiana, in the rest of them she is dead. If Indiana is in slavery, they are in chains. If Indiana is fevered in the fumes of corruption, they are festering and rotten with political leprosy. I know, for I've been there. You are wrong. You are wrong."

Then the Colonel began the attack. He painted with the colors of patriotism—that meant partyism. He showed how first of all the men who had fought and bled were for the old party, and against any person or any movement that harmed it. He pointed out how it had punished certain men and delayed certain measures simply because they were forced upon it before it was ready; and how it had never failed to honor the men and adopt the measures that wisely consulted party interests. He deprecated treason everywhere; and the effect of this prohibition movement, how-

ever honestly endorsed, worked treason constantly.

After him came Tabor.

“Dean, you and I were both elected to this legislature, and sworn to do our duty as we could see it. I am in the same boat with you. I want to do what is right by my constituents as much as you do by yours. If a majority in Fairview can direct and bind you, a majority in Vigo can direct and bind me. We must together do the best we can for the people of both counties.”

The State officer had engaged Dean's friend in conversation, and took him into an adjoining room to prove by statistics that a certain popular epigram was a popular error.

“Now, Dean,” continued Tabor, “your people want a prohibitory law before anything else. My people want it too, but they demand some other things first. There are thirteen of you, all bound to secure that one thing, whether anything else is done here this winter. There are 137 of us, all insisting on some other things with equal earnestness.”

The Colonel and the visiting statesman went over to the window to prosecute a warm argument as to the terms of a certain surrender. Dean and Tabor talked on. In half an hour the State officer and Dean's friend came back from the adjoining room, and the latter was jubilant because

he had convinced his companion the epigram was not an error. He was quite in good humor with himself, and was inclined to be magnanimous.

The conversation became general. No one asked what Dean and Tabor had concluded to do. A wider range of topics engaged them all. A waiter came up with more bottles and glasses, and again the bibulous brethren drank. This time they did not apologize for the offensive act. It was so common here that it was not considered in ill taste at any time.

Dean and his friend went back to their hotel.

"Well, how do we stand?" inquired the lobbyist.

"Dean's all right," responded Tabor. "He does not come very high, either."

"His friend is rather an inexpensive luxury, too," said the State officer.

"Legislators are getting cheaper every year," remarked the Colonel.

"To sum up, then," said the lobbyist, lifting the straightened fingers of his left hand and touching them each in turn with the index finger of his right, "there's Fletcher will vote against the resolution whenever we want him to, if his little boy is made a page." And he tallied one. "Peyton will do whatever we want, and has signed a receipt for the purchase money." And he tallied again. "Winterman will move to strike out the enacting

clause, but his friend, the warden, must be white-washed." Three fingers were now bent over, and the fourth was carried down with a sort of impetuous, triumphant charge, as the man concluded—"and Dean is ours all winter."

Hollowell headed the list of caucus nominees, and all over the State the news was heralded that the Prohibitionists had dictated it. They commanded the situation. Already a committee was busy drafting the bill for a prohibitory law, which would now certainly be passed by the House. The Senate would not dare defeat it, and the Governor would sign it. A feeling of devout thankfulness went up all over the State. The faithful were never before so near success. Opposition to the movement was not loudly expressed. If one might judge by what was read and heard, one would surely conclude that the only active sentiment abroad in Indiana was in favor of the amendment.

This ominous silence preceded a storm. The Dean bill had been presented to the House, and referred to a committee. It was published all over the State, but the papers that presented it had nothing to say either in praise or censure. It came up in committee, and was favorably reported with scarcely the change of a line. Excepting that Winterman had been grievously offended by

Dean, there had been no sort of a hitch in its progress. The gentleman from Porter seemed unaccountably enraged by something in a speech the chairman had delivered, and no apologies would pacify him.

“I’ll make you sorry for that, Mr. Dean,” he said, walking swiftly up and down the committee room, and panting in rage.

The bill was placed on its passage with no more opposition than would have been met by a motion to order additional stationery. A day was set for the debate to begin—and then came the clamor!

CHAPTER XXIII.

TOO BASE FOR INSULT.

From corner to corner the whole commonwealth blazed with the fury of denunciation. Language was taxed. Vocabularies were exhausted. Vituperation was unleashed. From every county-seat came indignant demands to defeat that measure.

“The people do not want it. Public opinion is not ready for it. It will turn peaceful communities into hoards of wranglers. It cannot be enforced, and a dead-letter law breeds contempt for all law.”

That was one view. Here was another:

“We have no right to adopt it. We have no right to confiscate the millions of invested capital. We have no right to control private conduct.”

And here was yet another:

“Vote it down. Drive its defenders from cover. Whip them out of their thin cloaking of sanctity. Teach them that the people—their masters—repudiate them. Chase the fanatics from the halls of the House, and cram this insane

enactment down the throats of the men who made it."

Not only the State, but the nation, was wild with the uproar. From every capital, from every city came the same loud cannonade. Personal abuse, ridicule, slander—anything that could sink the bill and crush its friends, was quickly employed. And there was no time for the reformers to rally. So long delayed, so sudden and so fierce had been the assault, that they stood stricken and helpless in the face of an opposition that seemed universal.

Wesley Grant hurried to the capital. His friends must gather nearer the battlefield and lend encouragement to frightened legislators. The sentiment which was disclaimed must assert itself, or all would be lost. The old man had rested so securely in the belief that the bill would become a law that this furious assault startled him. He summoned a score of men to meet him at the State House, and then tried to see and talk with those on whom he had depended. He knew by Dean's compact that all he asked at organization had been pledged him. Tabor had committed a certain majority to the passage of this measure. In exchange every office had been surrendered, and half the business of the session was already accomplished. Would they dare attempt such treachery? Was there no spark of honor about them?

He sat in the gallery and watched the proceedings below him. He marked this one and that one, who had been sent up here for just one duty before all others. He saw young men who owed him their election, and he wondered if they had been corrupted. He sent twice for Dean, but that gentleman was busy, and could not see him before evening.

Disappointed and chagrined, he went out and walked the busy streets. He was almost distracted, and this unusual movement and life relieved him. He must brace himself for the worst, whatever it might be, and resolve never to be disheartened. He went to his room, and this telegram was handed him:

Esther is gone. People here think she is with you. I have notified detectives to be on the lookout for her. John Haberly is in Fort Wayne, and will be in Indianapolis to-morrow night.

ELLET GRANT.

Old Wesley knew what it all meant when he had read the three first words, but the blow was no less crushing. He did not rave or fall, or go out for help. He did not second Ellet's efforts to find her. That seemed like publishing his shame. He only laid his weary head down on the table, and wept like a bereaved child.

How close to his heart this girl had lain! How he had fondled her—just yesterday, it seemed—

when as a baby she cooed to him and rolled her shut hands in his face! How he had rocked her to sleep night after night in those days when his hands were firm on the plow; and how she had loved her strong father better than any one else! How he had watched her growing from slim girlhood to woman's sweet estate, mingling the light of beauty with the shade of duty, till heaven or earth seemed equally her home; and how she had gone from him at last—

Poor, tired, gray old man; how much his heart had borne! Yet it was in his nature that not even this calamity could turn him from the master purpose. No use going home; she was not there. No use rushing abroad in search; she would not be found that way. And, after all, this was only one more nail to drive in the coffin of that power which made evil *all* that was good. Surely God would curse it that it might die.

He stood up at last, but his head would droop forward. He started to walk about the room, but the springing step with which he began would falter and grow slow.

Dean did not come up as he had promised, and Wesley went out to find him. The bill had been hurried forward, and to-morrow they would vote. He must know more about the present status. From what he had learned in town, no changes

were counted on yet. As he neared that final moment the old man's nerves were strung with a closer tension. He was not composed, strong, confident; he was uncertain, suspicious, just trembling on the verge of anger, and just catching himself forming a curse for this one and that one who had deceived him.

He could not find Dean. Gentlemen of whom he inquired had seen the member from Fairview "only a moment ago," but none of them could see him just now.

He went to the train, and met Otway from Allen, and Singleton from Posey. They had followed him through the campaign, fighting with all manfulness for the legislature, and had rejoiced with him when they saw victory perch on his banner. They had asked no favors and made no threats, but they had done all their work so well that they looked for the law as they would look for day after sunrise. But they were followers still, not equals; and when they marked how crushed this sturdy leader was, their spirits fell, and the light of triumph faded into the cloud of fear. They found a few of the members who had sworn allegiance, but could learn nothing authoritative from them. Some expressed the sentiment that they were mistaken in thinking the State wanted prohibition—either in this way, or at this time.

"If you had been here all winter," they said to Otway, "you would see things different. The voice of the people ought to rule, and we think the voice of the people is loud against any such movement. Still, we don't know of any change in the situation. Dean and Peyton are managing this thing."

The delegation wandered around here where they had expected to be received with honor, and grew weary in the empty quest of busy statesmen.

Wesley told none of them his greater trouble. He must bear that alone. It was lighter so.

Next day the galleries were crowded. Many women had been admitted. The debate would be very interesting. The floor was better occupied than usual. Around the door was a larger crowd of those who had a word to say with men within. Somehow, the sense of great events pressed upon actors and auditors alike. The chamber was quieter. Was it stern resolve, or cowering shame?

The Dean bill had passed its third reading, and was placed upon its passage.

"Mr. Speaker," said Representative Winterman, with an angry glance at the Chairman of Committee. He had shouted the same words yesterday, but so wild was the confusion of business that he hardly heard himself. Now they

rang across the silent spaces, and a thousand eyes glanced from him to the chair.

"The gentleman from Porter," said the presiding officer.

"I move as an amendment that the enacting clause of this bill be stricken out."

The words fell like a knell on the ears of those men who had earned success. There was a startled exclamation, a shifting of position, a rustle of amazement from the galleries. But no one on the floor looked up there. All sat with that stolid silence which meant the fulfillment of a programme—which meant hire and service.

Were the friends of the bill waiting, as Warren's men waited that morning in June, till the whites of the enemies' eyes were seen? Were they waiting, crouching, trembling for the spring which should stifle corruption and vindicate a people's expressed demand?

There was little debate. The flow of eloquence which was to have gratified a listening nation, faltered in half a dozen spiritless speeches. The champions were silent. Dean, Peyton, Fletcher were delivering the goods they had sold.

The audacity of the assault on the very enacting clause showed the strength of the opposition. Wesley Grant buried his face in his hands and groaned. He had hoped to sit here and see this

monster throttled, and he had raised, provisioned and equipped the army that could and should have done it. He summed up somewhat of the counts he had against it, for the speeches were not worth the hearing.

“Then I had home; now I have none. Then I had Ellet, and now he is lost. Then I had Esther, and now she is gone. Then we were rich and honored and respectable; now I am the father of a disgraced, defaulting sheriff, the father of a wayward and wandering daughter, and the husband of a woman who has been struck by her own child. May God arrest this day the flood which is sweeping other homes into the gulf where mine lies ruined!”

Why, how bound up in this day's action his whole life had become! As one after another the barks of his loves slipped from him, he had comforted himself in the hope of this event. And as it had marked an era for him, so had it been regarded by ten thousand other men—and by a host of women, who are never counted. All that the men had planned and hoped and worked and voted for; all that the women had wept and prayed for, was to have received completion here and now. Young men had pictured it as one of the heroic things that might live in story. Old men had based on a decisive vote here the certain prom-

ise of an escape from thralldom. To them this picture of a House so passive, of a champion so inert, of great truths so weakly spoken, of opposition so boldly arrayed—all this to them was indeed a mystery, and could have but one solution.

Wesley could not wait till that dull speaker had sated himself with killing time. He opened his eyes and saw Dean sauntering carelessly in from the cloak room. He must say one final word to him, even though it be hopeless. He hurried down the carpeted stairs, and sent for the gentleman from Fairview.

“How are you, Grant?” said Dean, rather too nervously to be cordial. “I can’t give you a minute just now. Ready to vote, you know. Oh, we’ll carry it by four or five. Glad you came to see our triumph—your triumph, too, if it is any man’s in Indiana.”

Somebody just inside the swinging baize doors said “Dean,” in a questioning, warning tone, ending with a rising inflection. He turned quickly, bowed deeply to the countryman, and hurried to his seat.

Wesley climbed the stairs again and hastened to his place, for there was a commotion below.

“Vote! Vote!” members were shouting.

“Mr. Speaker! Mr. Speaker!” certain other members were shouting. Pages were running

about like mad. There was an uncommon and an energetic crowd in the lobby. Hollowell was pounding the desk fiercely without in any way silencing the uproar.

Presently the clerk was calling the roll, though no one had heard a ruling.

Old Wesley Grant leaned forward, grasping the rail before him, and trying to follow each "Aye" and "No," and catch the voter with his eye to bless or curse him. Could they—could they strike out the enacting clause? At last they had ended, and he stood waiting with strained senses for the final announcement. He quivered with rage at the stupendous insolence, and held his breath in the silence that followed as the vote was proclaimed.

"Ayes, 51; noes, 49. The motion prevails."

There was an instant of confusion below him. Members had left their seats and were hurrying about. They seemed just set at liberty, and the failure or success of legislation was of no account.

The hum and clatter which announced a question settled was at its height when a tall, gray man in the gallery towered up before them, close to the rail, and dominating every chair in the House.

"You are a set of cowards," he shouted. "You perjured, corrupt, ungrateful dogs! You rascals, villains, traitors! You are a set of cowards!"

Of course he was silenced. An officer caught him roughly by the shoulder, and forced him to his seat. The noise below had abated. Members stood looking up at that tense figure, stood listening to the passionate reproach, the fierce denunciation, and stilled their little clamor in the outburst of a breaking heart.

Presently the most shameless of them rallied. They talked together in a group for a moment, then fell apart and stood glaring about them.

"Mr. Speaker," cried Tabor, of Vigo, "the man should be punished. He has affronted the whole State of Indiana. He has insulted this House. I de—"

"No, I haven't," retorted Wesley Grant. "This House is past insult." And he went without a struggle beside the officer to the very door of the capitol.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE WRECK.

Otway and Singleton joined him immediately.

“What shall we do?” they inquired; but he turned from them and walked alone down the busiest street. They followed him, afraid for his reason. The strain had been too much. He had too certainly counted on success. Failure meant so much to him. He did not seem aware of their presence, and so they let him wander on, only keeping him well in sight, and guarding him from all harm.

For hours the old man paced steadily forward, keeping at first in busy streets, and looking straight before him. Finally his footsteps turned toward the quieter portion of the town. Twilight was rapidly sinking into darkness. Far down the street a man was coming toward them lighting the lamps. Half a block away he thrust his torch into a globe and waked the bright flame just as two young women passed him and stopped at the entrance of a house. One of them was very handsomely dressed. The other followed her in.

Wesley Grant had been watching the lamp-lighter until this point, but he dropped him now, and fixed his eyes on the cold front of that brown stone building. At the end of the square he crossed over, and came back on the other side, his friends following him silently. He had passed the house without a motion further than that still gaze against the solid door. But right in the shadow of the lamp he stopped. There was a sound of quarreling within. Women's voices were lifted in contention. Feet were beating a tattoo on carpeted stairs. A chain was rattled. The door was opened, and the well-dressed girl's companion sprang from the threshold, and stood without hat or cloak on the pavement. There were voices within in angry tumult—women, all talking together. The frightened girl turned toward the three men, and then old Wesley held out his hands to her, and said, "Come on, Esther; we'll go home."

It was void of passion or reproach, and was pitched in the kindly key of father love. In the tone and in the gesture there was the resurrection of a thousand days when she had brought her troubles to him, and lost them in the boundless depths of his great heart. But now she recoiled from him, shrieking in fear, and fled away in the darkness and the cold.

He turned and resumed his walk, not once noticing the men who followed him, and came at last to the hotel. He seemed to have recovered at least a portion of his courage, for he went about the work of quitting town with all the orderliness of a practiced traveler, and took the train for home. But he would not talk with them. He was not interested in what they said. When they mentioned the great disgrace of the day he only turned from them, and seemed occupied with the movements of truckmen and those who handled baggage. When they parted from him he shook their hands without meeting their eyes, made no response to their kindly wishes, and left them before they had done speaking.

From the window of the sheriff's office Ellet Grant saw his father come up town from the train next morning, and sent a deputy to get the team and drive him out to the farm. He followed from a distance, and saw his father riding away, then returned to his work, and did not wonder that the broad slouch hat covered a face white with the ashes of defeat and disgrace.

As he wrote there, a boy brought him a telegram. He looked at the clock and put on his coat.

"I am going to Indianapolis," he said to the chief deputy. "I may be back to-morrow."

A policeman had stopped the young woman as she had fled from that chance meeting with her father, and had taken her to the station till something could be learned about her, and till she could be provided with wraps against the chill of wintry weather. There they knew she was the person they had been directed to find, and they telegraphed to Ellet, while giving her all the care and comfort the shabby place afforded. They thought she was willing to wait until her brother came, but shortly after dark next evening she slipped from the room in which they had been lodging her, and was gone again.

As he stepped from the train in the great depot an hour after, Ellet saw her face in the window of a car just leaving the station. He had barely time to clamber up the steps as the crowded caravan swept through the doorway, and out into the silent, snow-heaped city.

This was Ellet's hardest journey, and he thought how bitter the cross must be to her who sat there just before him, uncomforted, and crushing the thorns of woman's crucifixion deep in her tortured soul. He longed to go to her and take all the burden of her own wrong. He longed to tell her how deeper than ever she could go he had trodden the way of error, and he resolved he would find some way to knit again the cord that once had

bound them, and rest her secure in the consciousness of a brother's love.

He had let an hour pass, and was turning from the flying silhouettes outside to the drowsing passengers within, half rising to go to her now, when a jolt and bounding motion of the car threw him from his seat, and called attention to the screaming whistle of the engine. Then came the roar which told of the covered bridge, and then the louder sound of rending timbers as they fell away and pitched the train with its trusting load into the rocky gorge beneath.

Some were sleeping, and roused from dreams to be choked with smoke and scalded with steam and frozen with icy water. Some were awake, and these were even less fortunate, for they had seen the danger sooner, and were struggling to escape. Ellet was dimly conscious of this as he gathered himself together at the side of the car, and looked for that bolt upright figure which he had been watching all the long ride from the city. There was fire between them, and he could hear her familiar voice, troubled with the labor of escaping from burdens which pinned her down and hurt her cruelly. He was half way to her, creeping over the writhing mass that struggled in the dark and shrieked its terror, when he found that only one hand was doing duty. The other

was crushed, and he could feel the warm blood that filled his sleeve, while the rest of his body was drenched with the cold water that poured in from the windows, now deep in the river.

Esther's complaints grew louder as he neared her. She was losing that rare self control which had always armed her. Her presence of mind was going, and she had left intelligent effort to struggle wildly for release. Just as the clamor around her had drowned the last of reason, Esther heard her brother call her, and was silent in an instant. He struggled on, close to the wall, past those who were escaping or praying for even death's deliverance, nearer to the flame in which he feared her voice was hushed forever, till he reached the place where she had been before the accident.

Groping there thus, in the chaos that was now lighted by the burning car, he found her, and pressed his face close down to hers, and in the wreck that ended life for some, these lives were reconciled.

She showed him where the timber, which had pierced the car, was pressed against her, crushing her shoulders and denying release, and he forced his body closer, wedging in between it and the wall, and crowding it away till she could escape. Then the sickening consciousness came that he

himself was not able to escape. With her release the timber pressed heavier upon him, and he could only wait until the fire, that ate so rapidly, should weaken his prison, and give him freedom. But long before that came he had sunk helpless and senseless upon the disordered chairs, and it was Esther's strong arms that found him and lifted him to safety.

CHAPTER XXV.

QUITE THROUGH THE VALLEY.

One of the deputies mounted a horse and rode to the Pretty Lake farm bearing the news of the wreck, and carrying also this message:

We were in the train that went down with the bridge. Ellet saved my life and is with me now. He is badly hurt.

ESTHER.

By 10 o'clock Wesley was in town. Papers were brimming with accounts of the catastrophe. His son's name was among the fatally injured, and his daughter was mentioned as one whose miraculous escape was notable, even in an event so thick with marvels. He went to the telegraph office and sent this message to the sheriff:

You have atoned that blow, Ellet. Come home.

FATHER.

Then he paced the narrow platform, or tried to wait in Major Poole's office till the train could bring these two who seemed coming back to him from the uttermost parts of the earth. What did it all matter, any way? They were his, and he was theirs. Life was so short. He could not afford to cherish even the memories of the months

that had passed. The harvest of his manhood was wasted in woe, but he seemed anxious to forget all but the years when Fate was kinder to him. He looked at his watch, and said to the lawyer that it wanted but half an hour of train time. Then he went out again, and started to the depot; but when nearly there he stumbled, staggered weakly for a moment, then, clutching his breast with both hands, fell senseless upon the pavement.

It was noticed he lay directly in front of Sautern's place of business.

Friends gathered in a moment and lifted him, trying to call back the tides of life that had already ebbed far beyond the power of man to summon them again. He made no sign, said no word, and passed in an instant from the hymn of chastened forgiveness to the everlasting chorus of the saints.

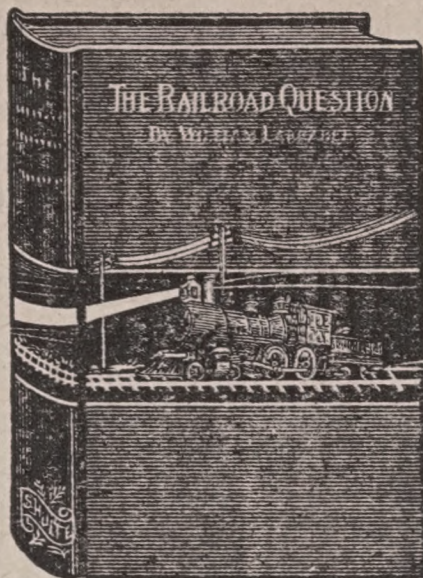
The other day I passed through Fairview. I was looking through the window at the pleasant streets and white houses of the town when Uncle Dave Edwards came in and took a seat near me. He remembered me after a time, and as the train rolled away, he told me about those I had known in the town.

"Yes, Poole got too big for Fairview, and went up to Richmond two or three years ago. I aint

heard from him, but I guess he is gittin' along. He's a mighty smart man sence he let whisky alone. Folks did say him and Alice was going to git married, but I don't know. He's a heap older than what she is. No, Ellet wouldn't have a second term of sheriff. They wanted him to, but he wouldn't. I used to be on his bond, and I got afraid of him onct, but he straightened everything up like a man. Esther? Oh, she lives on the farm and keeps house for Ellet. They aint got as much land as they used to have, but they are gittin' along. That four year in town was a hard thing for them, one way and another. John Haberly's out for Secretary of State this year, and I wouldn't wonder if he got the nomination. He's follered up saloons and politics too, and made 'em pay. That's a purty hard thing to do. Either you've got to break yourself, or break a lot of other people. Oh, yes, they're all gittin' along; but it aint the same as what it was. You can't never make anything in this world like it was. Old Mrs. Grant? Wesley's wife? Why, she's dead. She died right after Wesley did. That seemed to be the hardest part of Ellet's trouble; though why, I never knowed. Well, I must get out here. I want to look at some timber. Good-bye."

THE END.

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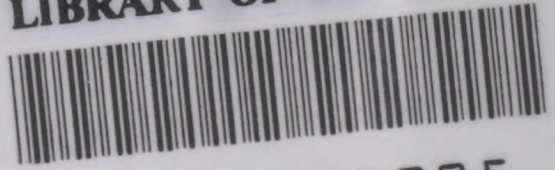


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